

A CONCISE
STATEMENT
OF
THE QUESTION
REGARDING THE
ABOLITION
~~OF THE~~
SLAVE TRADE.

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THE object of this Tract is to exhibit, as clearly and concisely as the extent of the question will permit, the grounds upon which the friends of the Abolition now urge the adoption of that great measure. This condensed view of the case may be useful to such persons as have not already examined its merits; to such as have not considered the connection between the late changes in St. Domingo, and the continuance of the Slave Trade, finally to such as persist in confounding two things always entirely distinct, and now quite INCOMPATIBLE, the *Abolition* of the Negro Traffic, and the *Emancipation* of the present stock of Slaves.

The argument is arranged in the following manner: First, A general view is taken of the Trade as it relates to the Negroes, in *Africa*—in the Middle Passage—and in the West Indies.—From hence an inference is drawn, that the burthen of the proof rests upon those who defend this Trade. Their arguments in its favor are then examined at length, as they refer to the interests of the Africans, the interests of those directly engaged in the Slave Trade, and the interests of the West Indian Colonies.—Under this last head are considered the new arguments which the advocates of the Abolition derive from the present state of St. Domingo.

Where no authority is quoted in support of facts stated, the Report of the Committee of Privy Council in 1789, and the Public Accounts laid before Parliament, are understood to be referred to.



CONCISE STATEMENT, &c.

“ON the 2d of April, 1792, the House of Commons voted by a very great majority*,
“*that the trade carried on by British Subjects for the purpose of obtaining Slaves on the coast of Africa, ought to be gradually abolished.*”—Several propositions for abolishing the traffic previous to 1796 were, during the course of the same month, negatived by small majorities; but on the 28th of April, it was resolved, “*that it shall not be lawful to import any African Negroes into any British Colonies or Plantations, in ships owned or navigated by British Subjects at any time after the 1st day of January 1796.*”—And

* 130 to 85.

although this resolution was carried by a narrow majority*, almost all who opposed it concurred in supporting a proposition for putting an end to the trade on the 1st day of January, 1800 : we are, therefore, entitled to conclude, that while a majority of the House voted for the Abolition at the earlier period, not above a fourth of the Members entertained any wish to see the trade continued beyond the end of the year, 1799 ; in other words, a much greater proportion of the Commons, than can in general be found to agree upon any ordinary question of policy solemnly resolved, after the most ample enquiries, and the fullest discussion, which a great question ever received, that the Slave Trade should cease nearly four years and a half ago.

The question is now about to be brought once more before the House of Commons. It is incumbent upon those who have not already examined its merits, to prepare themselves for one of the greatest deliberations in which they can be engaged ; to weigh accurately the various interests which the discussion

involves, and appreciate the different motives which may influence their views; to make themselves thoroughly acquainted with the shape and bearings of the question, so that neither the eloquence nor the authority which will be employed on different sides of the debate, may exercise an undue sway over their understandings. Those who were Members of the House upon the former occasions, have only to reflect on the discussions which they then heard, ~~to~~ recollect the clear conviction in which their minds were left, and to enquire whether any of the events which have taken place during the interval, are such as to change the nature of the case.

It is quite unnecessary to remind any one of the vast importance of the vote which he is to give upon this great occasion. The property of a large and most respectable body of our countrymen at home; the existence of the western wing of the British Empire; the improvement of a whole quarter of the habitable globe, hinge upon the final decision which this cause is to receive; and even these high considerations of policy, state necessity and universal philanthropy, are eclipsed by the paramount claims of national justice upon which

which the cause of the Abolition rests in the first instance for its support.

State of the Question.

The cruelties of the Spaniards having extirpated the native inhabitants of the West Indian Colonies, the proprietors of those settlements had recourse to the labour of Negro Slaves for the cultivation of the ground, the excavation of the mines, and the manufacture of such articles as are not exported in the state of raw produce. The robust constitution of the Africans was found peculiarly well adapted to those kinds of work in a climate too sultry for Europeans. As the cultivation of the colonies increased the demand for Negroes rose in proportion; and their labour soon came to be viewed as an essential part of rural economy in the West Indies. The extension of the colonial agriculture became as inseparably connected with the purchase of Slaves, as the improvement of waste land in Europe, is connected with the acquisition of live stock, to supply the blanks occasioned by mismanagement, or accident; the West Indian farmers had recourse to the Slave market, as regularly as the European cultivators went

went to the cattle market; and a constant intercourse has thus for ~~several~~ ages been established between the Coast of Africa and the Southern American Colonies, in every respect resembling the connexion which subsists between those parts of a great agricultural territory where animals are used for food or tillage, and those wild or poor districts where they are caught in the woods, or raised by breeding. The comparison which is here followed out, consists merely in a concise statement of the fact, and is by no means suggested with the intention of creating a prejudice against the Negro trade. It is necessary, however, that the fact be fairly expounded, lest the very erroneous idea should gain ground, that there is the slightest resemblance between the kind of cultivation to which the slave commerce is subservient, and the sort of labour in which the European peasantry are employed. The real nature of the work for which the importation of African Slaves has been found necessary, cannot be so well or so shortly defined as by comparing their condition with that of beasts used in tillage, from first to last—from their birth in Africa to the termination of their toils and sufferings

ferings in the West Indies. The wide difference will then be perceived between the condition of the Negro Slave and that of the peasant, in the most oppressed of the feudal countries, or even the domestic Slave in the most dissolute States of Ancient Europe, and Modern Asia. It is of importance then to sketch briefly a summary of the facts respecting the situation of Negro Slaves, which have been brought before the public by writers of all descriptions, and prepossessed with every variety of opinion upon the leading question. These facts, now admitted on all hands, relate chiefly to three points. The methods of procuring Negroes in Africa; the treatment experienced by the Slaves during their passage to America, and the purposes for which they are used after their arrival in the West Indies.

1. *Manner of procuring Negroes in Africa.*

It appears that Slaves may be obtained in two ways—either by certain methods which the laws and customs of the African Tribes authorize as just, or by means of open violence
and

and fraud, contrary even to the rude notions of justice prevalent in those uncivilized states.

• The chief legal grounds of selling Negroes are, the sentences of Courts of Criminal Justice, the right of Creditors, the right of Captors in War, and the right which a Master has to sell his home-born Slave in case of extreme poverty.—The crimes for which Negroes are punished, by being sold to Slave Merchants, are principally adultery and witchcraft. But it is proved, by the most undeniable testimonies, that there is no crime for which, by the African laws, this punishment is not awarded. That the accused is frequently sold, with his whole family, and that in many cases the profits of the sale accrue to the judges.—The Slave Merchants avail themselves of the right of Creditors, by trusting the Natives with brandy, rum, fire arms, &c. and then seizing upon themselves and their children in satisfaction of the debt.—The African Princes, in order to supply the Slave Market, go to war, as the natives of woody countries go to the chase, in order to supply the butcher market with game, and the term, by which in their language

“ war ”

“*War*” is expressed, means literally “*great pillage*”—An African who possesses Slaves never wants a pretext for selling them to the Trader, he has only to call himself poor, or to accuse them of witchcraft, and judge of the charge himself. In many parts of the interior the Master has the full right of sale, and a communication is kept up between the inland districts of that vast Continent and the Slave Coast, by means of the Native Slave Merchants, who traverse it in all directions, from Egypt and the Red Sea to Morocco and Guinea, from the Niger to the Mediterranean, and from Angola to the Mozambique Channel. Such are the methods by which it is held justifiable in Africa to make and sell Slaves. Not even there is it deemed just to use those other means by which the constant supply of the Slave Market is secured—fraud, kidnapping, and robbery—partly committed by the Natives among themselves, and partly by the European Traders.

2. *The Treatment of the Slaves on the Passage.*

All writers and travellers concur in representing the Negroes as men of a disposition peculiarly

liarly affectionate; and nothing, it is agreed, lays stronger hold of their affections than the place endeared to them by the recollection of their nativity and infancy. The author who has given this picture in the liveliest colours is Mr. Park, a gentleman who travelled for some years through the interior of Africa, and is an enemy to the Abolition of the Slave Trade. The effects which a violent separation from their families, and their home, must necessarily produce on the feelings of such men, it is easier to imagine than to describe, yet the wretchedness which essentially belongs to the cargo of a Slave Ship, is uniformly increased by the unnecessary cruelties that are practised; the horrid filth of which it is the scene, and the undue number with which it is crowded.

It would be too disgusting a task to repeat any of the dreadful narratives which were brought to light during the enquiries of the Committee in 1788 and 1789. Let it suffice to state, that the average loss of lives on the passage is above *twelve* in the hundred; that there is a farther loss of nearly *five* before the Negroes are landed; and a still farther loss of no less than *thirty-three* in seasoning, chiefly
from

from diseases contracted during the voyage. In other words, that yearly one-half of the Negroes exported from Africa die in consequence of the hardships of the voyage, and the change of situation. The friends of the traffic have boasted, that the rewards held out to those vessels which reach the West Indies with only a certain loss of hands, occasion many instances of voyages performed with a very small number of deaths. In plain terms, the Slave Trade is so intimately connected with torture and murder, that a bounty is required to diminish the waste of life, which it necessarily tends to occasion.

The following Extract, from a very inadequate Report of Mr. Wilberforce's memorable Speech upon the first discussion of this question is added, not as evidence of the facts just now alluded to, but as containing a clear and in no degree exaggerated statement of the proof brought forward from various quarters, the Committee, and printed in their report.

“ The description of their conveyance was
 “ impossible : *so much misery condensed in so*
 “ *little room*, so much affliction added to
 “ misery,

" misery, that it appeared to be an attempt, by
 " boldly suffering, to deprive them of the feel-
 " ings of their minds. Six hundred, linked
 " together, trying to get rid of each other, and
 " crammed in a close vessel, with every object
 " that was nauseous and disgusting; with pesti-
 " lence, disease, and despair, in such a situation
 " as to render it impossible to add any thing more
 " to human misery: Yet, shocking as this de-
 " scription must be felt to be by every man, it
 " had been described by several witnesses from
 " Liverpool as a comfortable conveyance. Mr.
 " Norris had painted the accommodation of a
 " slave ship in the most glowing terms; he had
 " represented it in a manner that would have
 " baffled his attempts at praise of the most lux-
 " urious scenes: " The Slaves, according to his
 " account, were fumigated with frankincense and
 " lime water; instruments of music were em-
 " ployed to amuse them; the *song* and the *dance*,
 " he had said, were *promoted*; the women were
 " employed in weaving fanciful ornaments for
 " their hair; games of chance were encouraged;
 " their food was alternately of their own country
 " and European; and they were indulged in all
 " their little humours, and kept in the utmost
 " spirits.

“ spirits.’ Another person had said,—‘ the
 “ sailors were flogged out of the hearing of the
 “ Africans, lest it should depress their spirits.’
 “ He wished not to say that such descriptions were
 “ wilful misrepresentations, if they were not, it
 “ proved that prejudice was capable of spreading
 “ a film over the eyes thick enough to occasion
 “ total blindness. Other accounts, however, and
 “ from men of the greatest veracity, made it ap-
 “ pear, that instead of apartments for those poor
 “ wretches, instead of those comfortable conv-
 “ niences above described, they were placed in
 “ niches, and along the decks in such a manner
 “ that it is impossible for any one to pass among
 “ them, however careful he might be, without
 “ treading upon them : and Sir George Yonge
 “ had testified, that in a slave ship, on which he
 “ went on board, and which had not completed
 “ her cargo by two hundred and fifty, instead of
 “ the scent of frankincense being perceptible to
 “ the nostrils, the stench was intolerable : the
 “ allowance of water was so deficient, that the
 “ Slaves were frequently found gasping for life,
 “ and almost suffocated, and the pulse which they
 “ were favoured with as a luxury of their own
 “ country, was absolutely *English horse beans*.

“ As

" As Mr. Norris had said the *song* and *dance*
 " was *promoted*, he could not suffer it to pass
 " without acquainting the House with the mean-
 " ing of the word *promoted*, as there used. The
 " way the *song* and the *dance* were *promoted*,
 " was by severe whipping, when the poor wretches
 " would not take voluntary exercise; their
 " dances and their songs afforded them so much
 " merriment, that the moment they were ceased
 " to be promoted, tears, sighs, and melancholy
 " succeeded."

3. *Situation of Slaves in the West Indies.*

It is by no means intended under this head
 to insist upon the various abuses which are
 admitted, in point of fact, to exist in the Slave
 system, although indeed it might very fairly
 be argued that many of those iniquities are so
 essentially connected with the unlimited power
 of masters, and the radical difference of the
 races, as to furnish a view of certain plain and
 inseparable features of the West Indian society.
 We are only at present to consider those pecu-
 liarities in the circumstances of Negro Slavery
 which must for ever distinguish it from every
 other kind of human servitude, and which bear
 " directly

directly upon the question of Abolition, by leading us to determine whether the existing plan of cultivation admits of any extension, either in point of policy or of justice. The following picture is drawn by a writer*, who to great natural acuteness and extensive information on general subjects, adds the advantage of a long residence in the Sugar Colonies, and his sketch is adopted as of unquestionable accuracy by the warmest enemies of the Abolition. †

“ That West India Slaves, whether French or English, are the property of their master, and transferable by him, like his inanimate effects; that in general he is absolute arbiter of the extent and the mode of their labour, and of the quantum of subsistence to be given in return for it; and that they are disciplined and punished at his discretion, direct privation of life or member excepted; these are prominent features, and sufficiently known, of this state of Slavery.

“ Nor is the manner in which the labour of Slaves is conducted, a matter of less publicity. Every man who has heard any thing of West India affairs, is acquainted with the term *negro-drivers*;

* Crisis of the Sugar Colonies, p. 2.

† See Mr. Dallas's interesting and very amusing
 “ History of the Maroons.”

drivers; and knows, or may know, that the 'Slaves in their ordinary field labour are *driven* to their work; and during their work, in the strict sense of the term, "driven," as used in Europe; though this statement no more involves an intimation, that in practice the lash is incessantly, or with any needless frequency, applied to their backs, than the phrase "to drive a team of horses," imports that the wagoner is continually smacking his whip. I use the comparison merely as descriptive, and not in censure of the West India system; with the accusation, or defence, of which, in a moral view, my argument, let it be observed, has no necessary connection. It is enough for my purpose, that in point of fact, no feature of West India Slavery is better known, or less liable to controversy or doubt, than this established method in which field labour is enforced.

"But a nearer and more particular view of this leading characteristic, may be necessary to those who have never seen a gang of Negroes at their work.

“ When employed in the labour of the field, as, for example, in *holeing a cane piece*, i. e. in turning up the ground with hoes into parallel trenches, for the reception of the cane plants, the slaves, of both sexes, from twenty, perhaps to fourscore in number, are drawn out in a line, like troops on a parade, each with a hoe in his hand, and close to them in the rear is stationed a driver, or several drivers, in number duly proportioned to that of the gang. Each of these drivers, who are always the most active and vigorous Negroes on the estate, has in his hand or coiled round his neck, from which by extending the handle it can be disengaged in a moment, a long thick, and strongly plaited whip, called a *cart whip*, the report of which is as loud, and the lash as severe, as those of the whips in common use with our waggoners, and which he has authority to apply at the instant, when his eye perceives an occasion, without any previous warning. Thus disposed, their work begins, and continues without interruption for a certain number of hours, during which, at the peril of the drivers, an adequate portion of land must be holed.

“As the trenches,” (continues our author), are generally rectilinear, and the whole line of holers advance together, it is necessary that every hole or section of the trench should be finished in equal time with the rest; and if any one or more Negroes were allowed to throw in the hoe with less rapidity or energy than their companions in other parts of the line, it is obvious that the work of the latter must be suspended; or else, such part of the trench as is passed over by the former, will be more imperfectly formed than the rest. It is, therefore, the business of the drivers, not only to urge forward the whole gang with sufficient speed, but sedulously to watch that all in the line, whether male or female, old or young, strong or feeble, work as nearly as possible in equal time, and with equal effect. The tardy stroke must be quickened, and the languid invigorated, and the whole line made to *dress*, in the military phrase, as it advances. No breathing time, no resting on the hoe, no pause of languor, to be repaid by brisker exertion on return to work, can be allowed to individuals: All must work, or pause together.”

The author afterwards illustrates the same facts by the examples of other sorts of field work, and it is only necessary to add, that the evidence collected by the Committee, as well as the accounts of various writers personally acquainted with the subject, would have justified a much more highly coloured sketch than the one here quoted.

Such being the nature of the Slave Trade, from the purchase, or theft, or plunder of the Negroes in their own country, to their distribution and settlement on the West Indian farms, of which they constitute the live stock, it is obvious that the burden of the argument is necessarily thrown upon those who would defend so inhuman, so unnatural a commerce. We proceed shortly to consider the reasonings which they have advanced, after remarking in general how much they have perplexed one of the shortest and simplest questions that can be stated, by confounding with it topics perfectly extraneous; as for example, the chimerical and insane projects of emancipation which have been adopted in France, to the destruction of the Europeans, and the lasting misery of the Negroes themselves, and which have, in their consequences

consequences, furnished the friends of the Abolition with some of their most powerful arguments against the continuation of the traffic.

The defence of the Slave Trade is pursued upon two grounds, as it relates either to Africa—or to the interests of the nations engaged in its operations. We shall consider these two branches of the question in their order.

I. Question of the Slave Trade, as it relates to Africa.

1. It has actually been maintained, that the Slave Trade is necessary for the civilization of Africa, and that the nature of the Negroes requires that they should be transplanted to America, and there civilized by main force. Of this extravagance the writings of the French Colonists are full; we find such topics resorted to by an author of no less name than Barré St. Venant, and the general position, that the Negro Slave is happier than the European Peasant, has been maintained by almost every writer, both French and English, who has defended the traffic. It would be wasting time to refute such unaccountable doctrines, we shall only

only state the argument in the words of its authors, and then give, by way of counterpart, the similar reasoning which has been urged to exculpate the Spaniards from the charge of having treated the native Americans with any sort of cruelty.—The following is M. Barié St. Venant's defence of the Slave Trade.

“ It will hardly be believed that motives of
 “ humanity alone, induced the Spaniards to
 “ procure African Negroes, for the assistance
 “ of the feeble Mexicans in the cultivation of
 “ their colonies.—Perceiving that the con-
 “ quered people were too weak to endure labour
 “ in their native country—then perceiving that
 “ the Negroes, living under a scorching sun,
 “ would find themselves more agreeably cir-
 “ cumstanced in a temperate climate—finally
 “ perceiving, that from time immemorial,
 “ slavery subsisted in Africa, with more horrid
 “ features than in any other country, they
 “ thought it would be rendering them a good
 “ service to take them from thence, and make
 “ labourers of them.”—(Vid. Colonies Mo-
 “ dernes, p. 40.)

The following is Campomanes's vindication of his countrymen, literally translated from the original Spanish,

“ The

" The author of the ' European Settle-
 " ments,' has retailed many fables of this kind
 " against the humanity of the Spaniards,
 " whereas, if he had taken the trouble of
 " reading our annals, he would have found
 " reason to admire, rather than to blame. ~~It~~
 " it is fair to draw any inference from the con-
 " duct of the Spaniards towards their Slaves
 " to their treatment of the Indians, it would be
 " easy to demonstrate that they excel all other
 " nations in humanity, and this is in fact uni-
 " versally admitted. If any one can be accused
 " of having acted with severity, it was Am-
 " brose Alfingai, in Terra Firma, a German, who
 " came over with a licence from Charles II. and
 " he is the only person who can be charged with
 " cruelty."—Education Popular, II. 172.)

2. The defenders of the Slave Trade in
 this country, have not pleaded their cause
 quite so high: they have, however, supported
 its justice upon abstract principles. They have
 maintained that Slavery has in all ages of the
 world existed, and that no country has ever
 been discovered in which traces of it might
 not be found—as if any degree of antiquity or
 universality could justify an atrocious crime :
 they

they have (may we not say) *impiously* taxed the blessed doctrines of our holy religion, with lending their sanction to the institution—as if any ingenuity could twist the gospel of peace, and charity, and meekness, into a communion with the traffic in human flesh, and the wholesale destruction of innocent life. But these arguments in defence of the trade, may fairly be thrown into the same class with the declamations just now quoted in its praise. they prove a great deal too much, and have therefore been speedily abandoned by the more skilful advocates of the cause.

3. In arguing this branch of the question, great reliance has been placed upon the manner in which Negroes are procured: it has been maintained that the chief sources of the supply are the wars of the native tribes, and the peculiar nature of their criminal jurisprudence. We shall for the present admit, that there are no other means of obtaining slaves; that no man ever sells his home-born Slave, unless in case of famine; that the Slave market on the coast, never holds out temptations sufficiently powerful to encourage kidnapping in those barbarous communities, where
the

the most imperfect form of police subsists, that, in short, no Negroes are ever brought to the traders by the native Merchants, who have not either been taken in war, or condemned in the courts of justice to be sold for their crimes; lastly, we shall admit that there is no impropriety in a civilized nation lending its countenance to the savage practice of condemning to perpetual bondage and exile, prisoners of war, and persons accused of a crime which has no existence. It is evident that the argument for the traffic gains infinitely by all these gratuitous concessions.—Yet let us see in what state they leave it.

“ If (Mr. Brougham observes *) the Slaves captured in war, and the criminals condemned for witchcraft, are sold at a good price, is it not obvious that a premium is held out for the encouragement of wars, and of futile accusations? It is said, that if the Slave market were shut up for ever, the same wars and accusations would continue; with this difference, that captives would be butchered, and criminals put to death.

No doubt, the Abolition of the Slave Trade would neither eradicate war, nor false

* Colonial Policy, vol. II. p. 564.

accusations from the States of Africa. To a certain degree, both of these evils would continue in that barbarous quarter of the globe; because both of them are produced by other causes, as well as by the Slave Trade; by other passions, as well as by avarice. It may, however, fairly be estimated, that more of the wars and false accusations which keep Africa in a state of discord and barbarism, are engendered by the temptations of the Slave Market than by any other cause. Does any one deny, that the common receivers of stolen goods encourage, beyond any other cause, the commission of robberies and thefts? Yet the expulsion of every common receiver from a country (were such a thing possible), would not abolish either of those crimes. But surely nothing could be more absurd, than to dispute the propriety of taking all possible steps for rooting out such pests of society, merely because a complete cure of the evil would not be effected by this remedy.

As to the argument, that massacres and executions would be the consequence of the abolition, we may be sure that, for a few campaigns of African warfare, or a few terms of the

the African courts, victories and convictions would end in the death of some men, who would otherwise have been sold. This would be exactly the consequence of the previous demand for men occasioned by the trade. It always takes some time before the supply can accommodate itself to the varied demands of any market, whether the variation be that of increase or of diminution.

No measure, surely, could be better calculated to preserve the lives of wild beasts in any well stocked country, than the prohibition of exportation to foreign menageries; yet, for a few seasons, this law would certainly increase the number of animals devoted to death; because those whose habits had been formed by the old practice, would continue to hunt, and many would still hunt for amusement, or the gratification of cruel passions: and as the price of wild beasts would fall in the home market, men would grow careless of preserving their lives: nay, more being for some time caught than the supply of the home menageries required, many must of necessity be killed. But the supply would soon accommodate itself to the lesser demand; and though some men continued to hunt for
pastime,

pastime, and infinitely smaller number of beasts would be taken and killed than formerly. This case is precisely that of the African Slave Trade.

The Abolition of this traffic will diminish the demand for Slaves by seventy or a hundred thousand. The Slave Trade carried on by the East, through Egypt, is extremely trifling. In Cairo, which is the Slave market of Egypt, and the *entrepôt* of other countries, there are only sold annually from fifteen hundred to two thousand Negroes, and the price never exceeds one hundred crowns, the average being about ten pounds sterling, not above one fifth of the price in the West Indies, and not one half of the price on the West Coast—*Sonnum's Voyage in Egypt, chap. XXVII.—Report of Committee 1789, Part VI.—Edwards' West Indies, B. II. c. 2.*

Besides, it is universally admitted, that no comparison whatever can be drawn between the eastern and western Slave Traffic. The treatment of the Negroes in those oriental nations which employ them as Slaves, is mild and gentle. they are used entirely for domestic, and even honourable purposes: they soon acquire their

their freedom with the favour of their masters, and partake as much of the refinement and comforts of society in which they reside, as our menial Negroes do in Europe.—*Soumini, chap. XXXI.—Bruce's Travels, vol. I. p. 392.*

It is maintained by some, that the Slave Trade, both in the east and west of Africa, has abolished the use of human flesh, and the practice of human sacrifices.—*Bruce I. 392.* But, besides that, this fact appears extremely repugnant to the character of the Negroes, which the best and latest travellers have given, (*Park's Travels, chap. XX. XXI. XXII.*) admitting all the advantage just now stated to have been gained from the Slave Traffic, do we by the instant Abolition of this Traffic, lose any of the steps already gained in improving Africa? For who can be so foolish as to imagine, that the Africans, in whatever manner they have been civilized, will ever return to their ancient habits of cannibalism and human sacrifices? Let us, then, by abolishing the trade, secure and carry forward those very improvements which the trade may have been the means of beginning.”

* The authorities which Mr. Brougham quotes in this argument, are all strenuous defenders of the Slave Trade.

4. But it is said, that whatever evils may result from the Slave Trade, the Abolition of the commerce by any one nation would not at all benefit the African Tribes; that if Britain were to give up all connection with the coast, other states, as France and Holland, would take up the business; and that the Negroes would then be transported, and enslaved, by the French or Dutch, instead of the British.

The answer to this sophism is sufficiently short and obvious. If the Abolition of the Slave Trade means any thing, it is that the importation of Negroes into any British Colony shall thereby be prevented, whether in French, Dutch, or British vessels. The share of the Trade which may fall to France and Holland, upon our giving it up, can only be that part which we formerly carried on for the supply of their colonies. The chief drain of Africa is occasioned by the demands of our own islands, and the Abolition of the Slave Trade is intended to stop up that drain. But further, may not the same argument be used by the other nations engaged in the traffic? It has in fact been used by them—the French and Dutch Colonists have repeatedly urged the in-

utility of their giving up the Slave Trade; on this ground, that it would be immediately engrossed by the British, so that a tide of iniquity and shame is to be supported to all eternity, because each of the parties engaged in it, *may* say, that the others *might* continue it!—The use of the same argument, at the same time, and in the very same terms, by all the parties, is a complete demonstration of its absurdity. There is language more becoming the public virtue and dignity of this great nation. “We have been the chief traders, that is, the principal leaders in the crime—we are the first to repent, and set on example of amendment.”

Having examined the only argument that have ever been invented to palliate the enormities of the Slave Trade, as they affect the African nations, the advocates of the Abolition have undoubtedly made out their case. For, if what is most improperly denominated a trade appears clearly to be a national crime, can any thing be urged in its defence upon grounds of expediency? Do we vindicate an act of violence; a cruel, mercenary murder, for example, by proving that it has been profitable?

If the wages of national guilt are a sufficient vindication of it, let us at least not lose the benefits of this golden maxim, let us be consistent with ourselves, and employ our navy in a general system of piracy upon all the lesser powers of Europe—Or if we are afraid of them, let us enrich ourselves at the expense of those insignificant states in Asia, and the north of Africa, who send any vessels to sea. The advantages of such a scheme are infinitely more undeniable than any that have ever been ascribed to the Slave Trade by its warmest advocates: the guilt of the transaction would be less, in the proportion of robbery to torture and murder.

We shall, however, suppose it possible that the argument against the iniquity of the Slave Trade has failed, or that the criminality of any measure is not to be weighed against its expediency, and we shall now try the question upon this ground.—Let us then examine the reasons which have been urged in favour of the traffic from its utility to the states engaged in it. These can only profit by the traffic in two ways; by the benefits of the carriage of Slaves, and by the opportunity of supplying their colonies with hands.

II. • Question of the Slave Trade as it relates to the Interests of those directly engaged in it.

1. It has been maintained that the African Trade opens a wide channel for the beneficial investment of capital, and that the Abolition by suddenly throwing out of employment so great a portion of stock, would give a serious blow to the commercial resources of the country.

In order to answer this, it will be sufficient to shew that the trade does not occupy any considerable part of the national capital—that the profits are of the description least beneficial to the country, and that the same capital, if excluded from this employment, would immediately and easily find a more advantageous vent.

According to the public accounts laid before Parliament from the Custom-house books, it appears that the official value of the exports to Africa during ten years, ending 1800, was £9,301,941, or £930,194 per annum. The average value of the imports from Africa during

during the same period, was £83,725, leaving the sum of £846,469, for the capital employed in the Slave Trade, and although we should allow that the official value is a third less than the real value of goods, the sum would not amount to more than £1,128,625, or not one *thirty-fourth* part of the average capital employed in the exports of the country during the same period of time.—And this is the trade which affords a demand for such a proportion of the National Stock, that its cessation must be attended with the instantaneous ruin of the British Commerce.

The profits of the Negro traffic are universally admitted to be extremely uncertain, and are therefore very high in successful speculations. This must be the case in all gambling trades, the few who succeed reaping the benefits of the numerous failures. But the returns, even in the most advantageous transactions, are more slow than those of the most distant branches of foreign commerce. The Slave Trade, therefore, draws that part of the national capital which it employs, to the occupation of all others most uncertain and productive of most remote benefits. The other branches of

our

bur traffic are infinitely more sure, and possess the advantage most of all conducive to the public good, that of much quicker returns.

The commerce which is carried on with Africa for her natural produce, has been uniformly increasing since the beginning of the last century, in spite of all the obstacles which the Slave Trade has constantly opposed to the civilization and culture of that unhappy continent. The African produce is various, and of the descriptions most in request among ourselves, and the nations with whom we trade. Its quantity may be indefinitely augmented in proportion to the demand which our capitalists furnish, and every increase in that quantity must necessarily be attended with an extension of civilization, and a developement of new commercial resources.

But even if no augmentation of the legitimate African Trade were to follow the Abolition of the Negro traffic, the various other branches of our foreign commerce, which are understocked with capital, would afford a ready and profitable employment for the small pitance thrown out of the Slave Trade. Can any one imagine that our powers of extending our

commercial resources, have so exactly reached their utmost point, that we could devise no occupation for *one thirty-fifth* part of the flock now vested in foreign trade?—How then does the capital which every year is rapidly accumulating, find employment in the traffic of the next year? Let the difference between the capitals vested in commerce at any two periods of our history be considered, and then let it be demanded whether the possession of new wealth does not bring along with it the faculty of opening new channels for its employment. The average of the capital employed in the exports of Great Britain during the three years, ending 1800, was above fifty millions. The same average during the three years immediately preceding, was less than thirty-eight millions and a half. How then was employment *suddenly* found for above eleven millions and a half? How could the country sustain the shock of this sum floating in its markets in search of employment; when the shifting of a tenth part of the sum from the Abolition of the Slave Trade, is deemed an experiment too dangerous to be tried? It may truly be asserted that very few changes ever take place in the political arrangements

ments of the state, or in its measures of commercial oeconomy, which are not attended with a much greater shifting of capital, than the Abolition of the Slave Trade, however sudden, could have effected in the periods of its greatest prosperity—How much the proportion of that traffic to the whole foreign commerce of the empire has varied at different periods, may be estimated from this consideration, that in the three years, ending 1787, the sum vested in it, amounted to one twenty-sixth part of the exports; whereas in the ten years, ending 1800, the same sum did not amount to a thirty-fourth part.

And here it may be proper to remark the incompatibility of the argument, that foreign nations will take up the Slave Trade, if we leave it, with the argument that the Abolition will throw capital out of employment. From whence are those nations to draw the capital which they may throw into the Negro traffic? Certainly every pound that they vest in this line, must be taken from some other channel in which it was formerly employed, and must leave a blank in that channel. This blank must now be supplied by a British pound, formerly employed

employed in the African Trade. So that the argument about displacing capital, loses force exactly in proportion to the strength of the argument about foreigners benefiting by our Abolition of it.

It is evident, therefore, that the capital vested in the Slave Trade is extremely trifling, that no method of employing it could be devised less beneficial to the country, and that even if it were much more extensive, an easy and profitable opening would be found for it, were the trade instantly abolished.

2. The Advocates of the Slave Trade have insisted, with great earnestness, on the necessity of the Traffic to the support of the British Navy. This argument will be best answered by examining the proportion of the seamen and tonnage employed in the Negro Trade to the whole seamen and tonnage employed in our foreign commerce—the proportion of seamen and tonnage employed by the capital vested in the Slave Trade, to the Seamen and Tonnage employed by an equal capital vested in other branches of traffic—and the proportion of the deaths among seamen engaged in the Slave Trade, to the deaths among seamen engaged in all the other departments of our navigation.

The average number of tons engaged in the African Trade, during ten years, ending 1800, was 30,995, including the trade between Britain and Africa, for goods, being less than the fifty third part of the tonnage employed in the foreign export trade of Great Britain alone, exclusive of the trade of Ireland, and of the whale coasting trade of the United Kingdoms. In 1800 the shipping belonging to the whole of the British Empire was calculated at 1,905,438 tons, of this the tonnage employed in the African trade does not amount to a sixty-third part. The whole seamen belonging to the empire were estimated at 143,661. The number of those employed in the African trade never amounted to a twenty-seventh part of this sum, even including the direct African commerce, and taking the whole calculation upon the grounds of the highest proportion of seamen alledged by the Liverpool merchants. And this is the trade which supports the British Navy—a trade which employs not a sixtieth of our Tonnage—not a twenty-third part of our seamen!

A thousand pounds employed in the African trade requires no more than 30 tons of shipping, according to the average of three years ending 1800. Employed in the other foreign trade of this

this country, the same sum requires above 50 tons, according to the like average. It is true, that an equal capital, employed in the African trade, requires a greater proportion of seamen than in any other known traffic; but this is easily explained, by attending to the next object of inquiry, the comparative mortality of this and of the other branches of commerce, to those engaged in them.

It is well known, that seamen uniformly shew the greatest alacrity to leave Slave ships for men of war, whilst in every other branch of trade the very reverse takes place; this is a strong presumption, at least, that the traffic is not remarkably healthy. When king's ships find it necessary to take hands from the Negro vessels, they frequently search whole crews without being able to get a man fit for service, those whom they procure are almost always cruel and untractable, and seldom free from infectious diseases. But the muster rolls of Liverpool and Bristol will be deemed unexceptionable evidence on this point. From these it appears, that of 12,263 persons employed in the Slave Trade, 2643 are lost in a year; whereas of the same number employed in the West India trade, not above 325 perish in the

same time ; in other words, the Slave Trade is above eight times more fatal to the seamen employed in it than the West India trade, which cannot surely be deemed the most wholesome of all the branches of our foreign commerce *. There is no wonder, then, that the African trade should require a greater proportion of hands than the other kinds of traffic ; but there is some reason for wondering that an employment so eminently fatal to our seamen should have been extolled as the nursery of the British Navy.

Whether, therefore, we compare the shipping and seamen required for the Slave Trade with the whole shipping and seamen of the empire, or attend to the relative proportions of tonnage supported by equal capitals in that and in the other kinds of commerce, or view the comparative loss of sailors incurred by the prosecution of this and of the other branches of foreign navigation, we shall be convinced, by plain undeniable facts, that no persons ever committed a greater abuse of language than those who praise the Slave Trade as beneficial to the naval force of Great Britain.

* The Report of the Committee, 1789, contains a variety of other evidence on this subject. See particularly Mr. Clarkson's Letter in Part II.

It has now been demonstrated, that the arguments in favour of the African Trade, as directly necessary either to the commercial interests or to the maritime power of this country, rest upon no tenable grounds. Let us proceed to examine whether the only remaining defence that has been urged is better founded.

III. *Question of the Slave Trade, as it relates to the interests of the West Indian Colonies.*

1. It is asserted that the labours of West Indian cultivation cannot be borne by Europeans, that the constitutions of the Negroes are admirably adapted to the task and the climate, and that they can only be made to work by the lash, in a state of slavery.

We shall admit all these propositions, and what does the argument in favour of the *Slave Trade* gain? No one is senseless enough to propose that the Colonies should be cultivated by Europeans, or that the Slaves already settled there, should be emancipated; the question is, whether any more should be imported? And it is surely no answer to this, that the Slaves already in the islands are necessary for their cultivation. The traffic has existed in defiance of every just principle, in violation of every

humane feeling; the fruit of our iniquity has been a great and rich empire in America. Let us be satisfied with our gains, and being rich, let us try to become righteous—not indeed by giving up one sugar cane of what we have acquired, but by continuing in our present state of overflowing opulence, and preventing the farther importation of Slaves. It is no innovation to abolish a trade which tends hourly to change our situation—the present condition of the Colonies can only be maintained by prohibiting any sudden and violent increase of the Slave Population. But it is alleged—

2. That the importation of Negroes is necessary for keeping up the stock already on hand; in other words, that our treatment of those men in the West Indies continually diminishes their numbers, and prevents their natural increase. So that it is justifiable to go on kidnapping, or purchasing (it matters not which), in order to procure a sufficient number of men, whom we may murder. We shall not, however, view the question in this light; we shall not at all inquire whether such a ground of defence is tenable; it will be sufficient to prove that there is no necessity whatever for continuing the Slave Trade, in order to supply the

the vacancies occasioned by deaths in the West Indies, but that, on the contrary, the Abolition of the Traffic must necessarily be attended with an immense natural increase of the Negro population already in the Islands.

The two important islands of Jamaica and Barbadoes contain nearly three fourths of the whole Slaves in the British Colonies; let us attend to the history of their population, as contained in documents furnished by the agents and governments of those islands, the persons most hostile to the Abolition of the Slave Trade.

The number of the Negroes in Jamaica in 1768, was 167,000; in 1774 it had increased to 193,000; and in 1787, to 256,000. The public returns of importation for the periods between 1768 and 1774, and between 1775 and 1787, when compared with the above statement of the total increase, shew that the average annual excess of deaths above births, during the whole nineteen years, was only seven-eighths per cent.; that the actual excess during the first six of those years was more than one per cent.; during the last thirteen years, only three per cent., that during the years prior to 1768, the excess of deaths was considerably greater

greater than it has been since; that this excess has been constantly diminishing, even from year to year; that during the thirteen years ending 1787, hurricanes and want of provisions destroyed above 15,000 Slaves, for which no allowance is made in the above estimate of the excess of deaths; and that no allowance is made for the deaths among newly imported Negroes, occasioned by diseases contracted on the voyage, as well as by the seasoning. There cannot therefore remain the smallest doubt, that instead of any excess of deaths above births at this time, the natural state of the Slave population in Jamaica is that of an excess of births above deaths, and that were the importation of Negroes immediately to cease, the stock already in the island would not only keep itself up, but gradually increase by breeding, even although the treatment of the Slaves were to continue in all respects the same as it has hitherto been.

From a similar comparison between the progress of the Slave Population and of the importation, in Barbadoes, as stated in the public accounts, after allowing for the hurricanes of 1784, it appears that the excess of deaths above births has been constantly on the decrease; that in the four years, ending 1786, this excess was less

less than one third per cent. ; that more than this excess may be accounted for by the exportation of Slaves, which has always taken place from the island, and which is not estimated in the above calculation, and that no allowance is made for the deaths among newly imported Negroes, by the diseases of the voyage and of the seasoning. Hence it follows, that the stock of Slaves in Barbadoes may be kept up, and even increased by breeding, were the Slave Trade instantly abolished. The same general conclusion may be applied to the other islands, as far as we are furnished with returns of their population and importations ; some of them, indeed, are well known to require no supply whatever, and to trust entirely to the natural means of increasing their stock.

It is admitted, on all hands, that the disproportion of the sexes in the imported Slaves, is the chief cause of their slow natural increase in our islands. This disproportion must evidently cease at the end of one generation from the period of the Abolition, and the natural increase will, after that, go on with redoubled velocity. The other causes which have been specified as retarding the augmentation of the Negro

Negro Population, are the infectious diseases imported from Africa by the new Slaves, and the effects arising from scanty food and rigorous treatment; the former circumstance must obviously terminate with the trade, the latter, we shall immediately shew, cannot be expected to continue after the Abolition shall be effected.

It may therefore be stated, as an undeniable truth, drawn from the evidence of public records, and of documents produced by those most hostile to the cause of the Abolition, that if the Slave Trade were instantly abolished, and if no reform whatever were to be effected in the laws, manners, and economy of the West Indies, the stock of Negroes already in the islands would be kept up, and even gradually increased, by breeding.

3. But the friends of the traffic proceed a step farther, and lead us to the real, substantial reason of their defence. The new and understocked plantations, say they, could not be brought into culture, without farther importations of slaves, and none of the plans which have been formed for the extension of West Indian property, by clearing tracks of woody country, could be realized, were the supply of Negroes

Negroes stopped. It is, indeed, impossible to deny this position. But the reader of the foregoing pages is intreated to consider, whether the advocates of the Abolition lie under any necessity of proving that the traffic is beneficial to no one class of the community, in order to make out their case against its continuance. If they have proved its radical iniquity in the amplest sense of the word—if they have shown that those actually engaged in it might find various innocent methods of employing their capital, with much more safety to themselves, and far greater benefit to the country—if they have demonstrated that the trade is not in the smallest degree necessary for maintaining the West Indian Colonies in their present state of splendid opulence, and, of consequence, that no injury can result from its Abolition to the wealth already acquired by the planters: is it not a most extravagant demand to require that they should admit the propriety of supporting such a commerce, merely because some men have built upon the hopes of its continuance, their expectations of acquiring or increasing their fortunes?—Surely it is abundantly sufficient to have proved that the abolition of

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by far the most criminal traffic which men ever carried on, will be attended with no injury to interests already in existence, although it should be admitted that the prospects of a few individuals may be disappointed by the change.

But we are told that those persons will be injured who have purchased plantations, with the view of extending their cultivation. They, however (as Mr. Brougham remarks*), "are only subjected to the want of what they might otherwise have gained, or at the utmost to a trifling inconvenience. They still possess an equivalent for their purchase-money. If they are not satisfied with the slow accumulation by means of natural increase, they may sell again, and remove their stock to another channel. They cannot now fulfil their expectations of acquiring a rapid fortune, by clearing the land, because the price of negroes will rise, or rather, for some years, there will be no possibility of purchasing slaves. But this is no real or absolute loss which can justify their demands of an equivalent. Suppose that the British Cabinet were disposed to annul the Methuen treaty; would it be necessary first

to consult all those merchants who, on the faith of it, had removed to Portugal, or settled a correspondence with that country, or vested their stock in French wines, or bought woollens to supply the market of Lisbon? Or, suppose that the East Indian monopoly were ~~abolished~~, would the holders of India stock have a claim for indemnification; or would the capitalists, who had laid out their money in shares of East India vessels, or in loans to captains and traders, have a right to demand compensation? But these cases are much more favourable to such claims than the one which we are considering. Suppose that a number of capitalists have vested their stock in the three *per cents.* at the end of a long war, from the full confidence that the value of the funded property will in a few months rise twenty or thirty *per cent.*; if the national honour is insulted, must all those stockholders be indemnified for their probable disappointment, before a war can be proclaimed? And can any stain be so deep on the honour and the character of the country, as the supporting of a traffic founded in treachery and blood? Can any measure attended with partial ~~loss~~ or disappointment

appointment, be in its essence more just and necessary than the immediate wiping out of so foul a pollution? Can any policy be more contemptible than that which would refuse its sanction to such a measure, for fear of disappointing those men who had arranged their plans with the hopes of fattening upon the plunder of the public character and virtue?"

The stock which is gradually accumulated in the mother country, always finds new channels of employment, although the population increases much more slowly than the slave population of the colonies will increase, after the new importations are stopped. How then should the augmented wealth of colonial proprietors fail to obtain employment, when the field both of the colonies and the mother country—the colonial commerce, and all the foreign trade of Europe, are open to it?

4. The last hold to which the advocates of the Slave Trade have had recourse, is the right of the colonial legislatures.—Admitting every thing which can be urged against the traffic, they observe, the Abolition of it belongs to the colonies themselves, and not to the British

Parliament, in which they are not represented.—This argument will, however, be sufficiently refuted, if we examine the foundation of the claim as a matter of right, and the probable consequence in point of fact, which will result from the admission of it.

The power of legislating for the Colonies has uniformly been exercised by Parliament from their first settlement to the present time; and the object of the laws thus made has frequently extended to matter of mere municipal regulation, as for example, the 5 George II. cap. 7. concerning the recovery of debts. In the American war this right of Parliament was objected to, in so far only as regards taxation, and if we wished to state, in the most ample terms, the general power of the mother country over the colonial commerce, we should have recourse to several of the manifestoes published by the North Americans during the rebellion. The declaratory act, which asserted the parliamentary right of legislation in all cases whatsoever, was only modified by 18 Geo. III. cap. 12, in so far as regarded taxation, and even the right of colonial taxation was expressly reserved,
 “ wherever

“ wherever it might be expedient to exercise it for the regulation of commerce.”

The statute 7 & 8 Will. III. cap. 22. sec. 9, therefore, which declares “ all laws made by the colonies void, if repugnant to English statutes extending to or naming them,” remains to this day in full force. Independent, indeed, of these considerations, we may remark the essential subordination of all colonial establishments, in the discussion of the most important imperial affairs? Does the Slave Trade interest the colonies more than the question of peace and war, which so often recurs? and is any colony ever consulted on such a discussion?

But it is of more importance to observe, that in the nature of things the mother country alone can reasonably be expected to abolish the Slave Trade. No assembly composed of Planters, and sitting in a Slave Colony, will ever, to the end of time, think for one moment of touching the traffic. Can we expect it? Can we blame the persons composing such bodies for their obstinate adherence to that system which ancient habits and prejudices, and the zeal of some intemperate men in attacking them, and the conduct of others, signalized by an insane and
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unprincipled love of change, have conspired to render venerable in the eyes of every West Indian. If every sound reason did not concur to teach us the folly of entertaining such hopes, we might at once be convinced by a single consideration. How many independent legislatures are there in the West Indies? Let it be admitted that a few colonies relinquish the trade; can it be supposed that every other will join them, when the partial abolition in one settlement renders the continuance of it more profitable to the rest? Yet if any one colony refuse to concur, the same doctrines of colonial supremacy must render the forcing of the measure upon that one, as unjustifiable as the universal violation of the colonial rights. In fact, the colonial assemblies and the planters have spoken very plainly upon these matters, and given us a full view of what may be expected from their deliberations on the Abolition. To go no farther back than the year 1799, the petitions of the British West Indian Islands to Parliament contain the most open and explicit avowal of the rooted determination of the Planters and Assemblies to support the Slave Trade for ever,

as an integral part of the colonial system. The tenor of these addresses clearly evinces the absurdity of trusting the most trivial branch of the discussion to the colonies; and, that any one should have been found thoughtless enough, after such declarations, to propose leaving the whole matter to the decision of the Planters, would be astonishing, upon any other question than the present.

Whether, therefore, we consider the rights of Parliament, or the probability of the Colonies themselves undertaking the necessary duty, we must equally be convinced, that the former alone can be entrusted with the final discussion of this important question.

5. Having by the foregoing statements exposed the total insufficiency of the arguments which the advocates of the Slave Trade urge in its defence, we are now to consider the direct effects of the traffic upon the wealth, the manners, and the security of the West Indian Colonies.

That the industry of a free man working for himself, or, which is the same thing, for hire, is much more productive than the labour of a
Slave

Slave toiling for a master, is a proposition so easily deduced from every principle of human nature, and so uniformly confirmed by the experience of all countries, as to require no illustration in this place. It may be proper, however, merely to copy the statement of the Assembly of Grenada respecting the comparative efficacy of the industry which a Negro exerts for himself, and of the work which is extorted from him by the lash of the driver.

“ Out of crop time it is the general practice
 “ to allow the Slaves one afternoon in every
 “ week, which, with such hours as they chuse
 “ to work on Sundays, affords them time
 “ amply sufficient for the cultivation of their
 “ own provision grounds; and it is to be ob-
 “ served, that although the Negroes are al-
 “ lowed the afternoon only of a day in every
 “ week, yet a Negro will do as much work
 “ in that afternoon, when employed for his
 “ own benefit, as in a whole day, when em-
 “ ployed in his master's service.”—Report
 of Committee, 1789, Part III. Grenada and St.
 Kitt's Answers to Query 9.

It follows most clearly, from this position, that the nearer a Slave is permitted to approach the condition of a voluntary labourer, in gentleness of treatment, and comfortable accommodation, the more productive will his work become. A state of despair, not of industry, is the never-failing consequence of severe chastisement, and the constant repetition of the torture only serves to blunt the sensibility of the nerves, and disarm the punishment of its terrors. The body is injured, and the mind becomes as little willing, as the limbs are able to exert. Bad food, scanty support of every kind, constant exposure to the extremities of the weather, must weaken the strength and exhaust the constitution even of a Cr le Negro. Want of rest, which those men can bear, or appear to bear, with miraculous indifference, must ere long wear them out. Both their bodies and their minds must sooner become incapable of labour than those of voluntary workmen, who have constantly before them the strongest possible motives to activity; and whilst complicated ill usage is rapidly destroying the lives of the sufferers, it must evidently diminish the productive

productive powers of the exertions which the survivors continue to make.

The facts which have repeatedly been said before the world, prove to a demonstration the truth of these remarks. It is established beyond all doubt, that the most unprofitable plantations are not always those of which the soil is unfruitful or incommodiously situated, but uniformly those which are cultivated by Negroes subjected to a cruel and stingy system of management; that the most laborious duty is performed by the best fed and most indulged slaves; that the more nearly the Negro is permitted to approach the condition of freedom in his enjoyments, his privileges, and his habits, the more alacrity does he shew in performing the task assigned to him. Yet, in spite of this uniform experience, so few experiments have been tried of the mild and profitable system of management, that those plantations into which it has been introduced are pointed out as remarkable. The exception to the general rule is not found in that estate, of which the proprietor prefers the commission of cruelty and injustice to the pursuit of his evident advantage, but in that estate, of which the owner or superintendent pursues

fues the easiest and most profitable system of management, notwithstanding its moral rectitude. There appear, then, to be certain bad principles inherent in the human heart, certain blind passions and movements of caprice, which constantly impel men, in certain circumstances, to a line of conduct as obviously inconsistent with their interests as repugnant to their duty.

It is not the intention of these observations to insinuate any thing against the West Indian Planters, a class of men, whose general respectability is equal to their wealth — But the details of their estates, and the whole management of their Slaves, are certainly committed to another order of society, extremely different in their character and habits. The overseers of plantations, whose interests are not immediately affected by the state of the concern, are surely not the men most likely to be careful of the Negroes, so long as the blanks occasioned by their bad management can be speedily supplied at the expence of their masters. Some plan is therefore necessary to attract the attention of proprietors, and fix it steadily upon their best interests. Both they and their overseers are most likely to be roused by that measure

* measure which prevents the importation of new Slaves.

If this grand reformation is once adopted, there needs no farther interference with the structure of Colonial society, or the concerns of the West Indian proprietors.— Every man may now be left to pursue his own interest in his own way. Few will continue to insist as to maltreat and work out their stock, when they can no longer fill up the blanks occasioned by their cruelty, or their inhuman and short-sighted policy. A great increase of wealth, and a rapid augmentation of the Negro population, will be the consequence of this milder system; for every proprietor of Slaves will attend to the breeding, as the only method by which his stock can be recruited, or his cultivation extended. The natural fecundity of the Negroes may be gathered, not only from their history in Africa, but still more strikingly from the estimates given in the Report of 1789, by which it appears, that, under all sorts of bad treatment, their numbers were kept up naturally in almost all the islands. The effects of a milder treatment may easily be imagined; and if facts were necessary to describe those effects, we might refer to the statements

ments of Mr. Jefferson, in his celebrated work on Virginia. The experience of the United States has distinctly proved that the rapid multiplication of the ~~negroes~~ in a natural way, will inevitably be occasioned by prohibiting their importation.

In a very few years all the Negroes in the West Indies will be Creoles, and all the ~~masters~~ will treat them with kind indulgence, for their own sakes. The enormous expence of new supplies (the greatest of all the burthens at present imposed on the Planter) will be intirely saved; the increase of Negroes by breeding will, on each estate, be in proportion to the accumulation of the proprietor's capital, and will, at the same time, furnish the means of bestowing that capital to most advantage, by clearing new grounds; the labour of the whole Negroes will be much more productive, and will, in some degree, resemble the industry of freemen; the Negro character will be improved; the way will be paved for the introduction of task work, already known in some of the South American Colonies, where the supply of Slaves is very scanty, and their treatment proportionally mild. The manners of the
other

other classes will also be ameliorated; the non-residence, so much to be lamented at present, and the want of women, so fatal to the Colonial character, will gradually wear out; the structure of West Indian society will more and more resemble that of the compact, firm, and respectable communities which compose the North American States.

The cruel treatment of the Slaves, is as unfavourable to the security, as to the wealth of the West Indies.

In strict conformity to those general principles which the best writers upon the human character have so successfully explained, and in broad defiance of all the absurd assertions, so confidently made by the apologists of the West Indian policy, it has been proved, by the united testimony of all the authors whose opportunities of information are most extensive, that the proneness of the Negroes to revolt, is in exact proportion to the cruelty and parsimony of their masters. The history of the Dutch colonies, contrasted with that of the Spanish and Portuguese settlements, and (we may add) the history of the Spanish and Portuguese settlements, contrasted with that of all

all the others, furnishes abundant proofs of this statement, in itself so extremely probable, that it requires scarce ~~any~~ support from experience to gain belief. ~~All~~ rebellions, the plantations where the slaves were treated with most indulgence have suffered the least from the fury of insurrection; and, on the contrary, those estates have generally been the hotbeds of the rebellion, or the first objects of its attack, where the overseer was cruel, and the master avaricious or needy; where, of consequence, the slaves were hard-worked, scantily provided with necessaries, and severely or unjustly punished.

Upon this point let us hear Mr. Malouet, an old Colonial Magistrate, strongly attached to the Slave system. He describes the bad treatment of the Negroes in the Dutch settlements as the main cause of the rebellions so frequent in those parts, and illustrates the position from a variety of facts which came within his personal knowledge. "What a delightful reflection," (says he, after expatiating upon the good management of some Surinam planters) "What a delightful reflexion for a feeling and humane master to reap the reward of
" his

“ his virtuous conduct! For the Planters of
 “ whom I am speaking have their estates
 “ covered with a numerous population of
 “ Slaves, who are affectionately attached to
 “ their families—who are never known to re-
 “ bel—and exterminate the insurgent Negroes
 “ as often as they approach the Plantations.”

The fact, it must be remembered, is stated with regard to the Colony, which, of all others, has suffered most constantly from Negro rebellion and defection, and which has been, more than any other, the scene of domestic cruelty and oppression.

But the dangers arising to the security of the Colonies from the large proportion which the imported Africans bear to the whole Black population, equally deserve our serious attention. It requires no argument to prove that the newly imported Slaves must be infinitely more dangerous to the peace of the community than those who have been born in the islands. Whether the Africans, partly stolen, partly purchased (if there can be such a thing as buying human beings with a price), were originally

* Mem. for the Col. tom 7. passim, especially p. 152. and tom iii. p. 116.

free or enslaved in their own country, it is manifest that the forcible transportation of those men is a misery not to be described, and their exile an affliction which must embitter the rest of their lives; and surely, the difference of climate, and the exchange of a life of indolence for one of most severe labour, is a sufficient grievance in itself to inspire them with the utmost aversion for their new situation, even if their banishment had been voluntary. Although we should admit every extravagant assertion which has been made with respect to the entire felicity of the Slaves in the West Indies, we must be convinced that this picture of happiness can only apply to the lot of Creoles; for the bliss of a state of Paradise or Elysium forced upon a sentient being against his will, amounts exactly to a contradiction in terms.

Accordingly, what we might expect has uniformly happened; the imported Negroes have been the first to promote rebellion, and at all times the most refractory and discontented Slaves. To keep them in order, as well as to teach them work, all the resources of the cruelty that forms the main spring of the Slave system, have been exhausted. And even this severity of
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itself is insufficient ; for it has been found necessary to incorporate the newly arrived Africans with the old stock, by degrees, never filling a plantation with too great a number of the former, and dispersing them carefully among the latter, for the sake of security and discipline. Notwithstanding all these precautions, the spirit of adventure has always proved sufficiently strong to increase very rapidly the numbers of the new hands. In proportion as the facilities of the African trade have been great, and the capital turned to the Colonial agriculture extensive, the islands have been filled with hordes of native Africans; until, in some cases, the numbers of bad subjects were so much and so quickly augmented, while the necessary proportion of the Creoles was of course decreasing, that extensive and fatal rebellion has been the lamentable consequence. As the large stocks, small profits, and pecuniary incumbrances of the Dutch Planters, have rendered their Slaves remarkable for bad treatment, and continual though partial insurrection or desertion, the unexampled rapidity with which the French Colonies were peopled during the ten years previous to the Révolution, produced, in all the finest parts of those settlements, so fatal

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a disproportion between the two kinds of Negroes, as has shaken the whole West Indian system from its foundation, and rendered its existence a matter which many enlightened men rather wish for than expect. The history of the French Colonies furnishes as fatal a lesson of the evils arising from the disproportion of Creoles to imported Slaves, as the history of the Dutch Settlements exhibits a picture of the evils arising from the habitual severity and oppression of the masters.

The following statements, extracted from the work formerly quoted *, contain a sufficiently precise demonstration that the two great causes of the Revolution in St. Domingo have been—the rapid importation of Negroes during the previous years, and the extreme ill treatment of the whole stock of Slaves in that ill-fated colony.

“ The authors of the *Encyclopedie Methodique* estimate the Negro population of St. Domingo in 1775 at three hundred thousand, after making allowance for the falsity of the returns, which were only two hundred and forty thousand and ninety five.—*Econ. Polit. et Diplom. tom. II. p. 140.*

* Brougham's Colonial Policy, vol. i. p. 532.

The whole of the article of St. Domingo is to be found in *Ruad, Traite du Commerce tom. III. p. 692*; so that either he is the author mentioned in the *Encyc. Method.* or he has borrowed from that author, or from the *Encyclopedie*.

Jeffreys, in his *West Indian Atlas*, gives the Negro population in 1764 at two hundred and six thousand,

Malouet states the numbers in 1775 at three hundred thousand. *Mem. sur les Colonies, II. 117*; evidently making allowance for concealments.

Neckar states the number in 1779 at two hundred and forty-nine thousand and ninety-eight. *Finances, tom. III. chap. 13.*

It is fair to conclude, from these authorities, that in 1775 the official returns of Negroes in St. Domingo made the number amount to two hundred and fifty thousand. It was about four or five years after this period that the great importation began, which continued till the Revolution.

According to the official returns, the importation for the year 1787 was thirty thousand eight hundred and thirty-nine; and in 1788
twenty-

twenty-nine thousand five hundred and six.—*Rapport à l'Assemblée Legislative*, 1790; and *Edwards's St. Domingo, Appendix*.

The average export from Africa, in French vessels, about the same time, was reckoned at twenty thousand.—*Edwards's West Indies, Book IV. chap. 2*; *Report of Com. 1789, Part II*. But the French state, themselves, that of the forty thousand exported from Africa by Britain, only thirteen thousand three hundred are retained in the British West Indies.—*Report of Com. 1789, Part II*. If this is accurate, the greater part of the remaining twenty-six thousand seven hundred must go to the French Islands.

Malouet states the annual importation of Negroes into St. Domingo, in French vessels, at above eighteen thousand; and the importation by the British traders at twelve hundred and fifty. This statement was written in 1775, and republished in 1802; but no alteration appears to have been made on this passage.—*Mém. sur les Cél. II. 150*. The average export of France from Africa, is given at thirty thousand for 1786, 1787, and 1788, by Arnould.—*Balance de Commerce, Part II. Sect. III*. And Barré St. Venant gives the

the importation between 1788 and 1791, (that is, in two years,) at sixty thousand.—*Colonies Modernes*, p. 81.

If, then, we consider the period from 1775 to 1790 as divided into two periods, one ending 1780, and the other ending 1790, we may reckon the average importation of the first period at fifteen thousand, on the lowest computation, and the average importation of the second period at about twenty-six thousand. The numbers in 1784 had only increased to two hundred and ninety-seven thousand and seventy-nine, according to the official return.—*Laborie, Coffee-planter, Appendix, Art. IV.* The returns for 1789 give this number at four hundred and thirty-four thousand four hundred and twenty-nine. But this is fairly ascribed by Laborie to the alterations in the mode of obtaining these. It is utterly impossible to conceive that there could have been in five years an increase of a hundred and forty thousand. Yet some have rashly asserted, that the numbers of the St. Domingo Negroes were increased by a hundred and fifty thousand during the five years ending 1790, evidently comparing the loose returns of 1784 and 1785—with the
more

more accurate enumerations of 1789 and 1790.
—*Wimpffen, Let. XXVII.*

Let us, however, in the first place, admit this inspection of the returns to be always an equally fair criterion.. The returns for 1790 give four hundred and fifty-five thousand as the total number of the Slaves.—*Laborie, Appen.; Wimpffen, Let. XXVIII.; Edwards's St. Domingo, Appen. and Chap. I.; Barré St Vincent, Col. Mod. p. 102; Moulouet, &c. &c.* Morfe has indeed (*American Geography*) stated this number at six hundred thousand, and Laborie at five hundred thousand, but these statements proceed upon rough calculation of the numbers probably omitted even in the most accurate returns; and that of Morfe is in all probability much exaggerated. We are therefore to confine ourselves entirely to the official number of four hundred and fifty-five thousand, and to compare this with the official number, two hundred and fifty thousand, of the year 1775.

We have here, then, a total increase of two hundred and five thousand Negroes in sixteen years. But according to the progress of the importation, and the natural progress of the population, the natural and forced increase
combined

combined ought to have been much greater. Suppose that, by the natural mode, no increase ought to have taken place, and that the propagation only balanced the mortality, both in the original stock of 1775, and in every subsequent increase by importation, the total increase of the first six years, admitting that there were two males to every female imported, and that no account of the odd males is to be kept, should have been sixty thousand; and of the second period (ten years) on the same suppositions, about a hundred and seventy-four thousand; and the whole increase should have been about two hundred and thirty-four thousand, or above twenty-nine thousand more than the actual increase.

But this difference is evidently much less than the truth; for no account has been taken of five thousand male Negroes annually imported during the first six years, and eight thousand six hundred and sixty-four during the last ten. In order to correct the calculation, we shall suppose that one death in twenty of the population is a fair estimate for the West Indian climate, being much more than in the worst climates of Europe. It may easily be computed, that at the end of the sixteen years, there would remain

remain, of the odd males imported during that period, above eighty thousand.

Besides, no account has been taken of the superior accuracy with which the returns were made at the end of the period under consideration. This circumstance must evidently increase the difference still farther. For we find that during nine years ending 1784, the total numbers had only increased from two hundred and fifty thousand to two hundred and ninety-seven thousand; whereas, supposing the propagation only to have kept up the stock, the importation during that period should have produced an augmentation of a hundred and twelve thousand, at least. Instead, therefore, of a difference of a hundred and nine thousand, in the whole period of sixteen years, we may safely conclude, that there was a difference of nearly a hundred and forty, or that the common good treatment experienced by the lower orders of the most unhealthy countries in the world, would have produced on the population of St. Domingo an increase greater, in the proportion of seven to four, than the increase which actually took place during the sixteen years of great importation.

The nature of the treatment experienced by the Negroes in that island, may from this statement easily be estimated. But several calculations have been presented to us, directly confirming the same position, and demonstrating, that the cruelty or hard usage of the French Colonists was extreme. The general statement of the report of 1789, upon the treatment experienced by the Slaves in all the French islands, is decisive of this point. We may add the particular testimony of two able men, who drew their observations from personal knowledge. Baron Wimpffen (*Lettres, No. XXV.*) states, that of the Negroes imported into St. Domingo, twenty per cent. die during the first year, while only five per cent. are born; and of these five, one infant dies of the tetanus in the first fortnight. M. Malouet says that it requires from four to five thousand births, besides the annual importation of eighteen thousand Slaves, to keep up the stock; and that the only total addition is the contraband with the English Islands.—*Essai sur 'St. Domingue, p. 148, & seqq.*—Thus, according to Wimpffen, the deaths among the imported Negroes are about five times more numerous than among the people

people of any other country, and the births five times less numerous ; and according to Malouet, the mortality of the whole stock is between two and three times greater than that of the natives of any other country on earth—a sufficient commentary upon the boasted humanity of the Planters in the French Islands, and a useful lesson upon the profits of the Slave System.

Such has been the history of the Negro population in St. Domingo, and such the steps by which the Slave Trade prepared the society in that unhappy island for all the miseries of a servile war. If nothing but a transient rebellion had been the consequence of that unnatural state of things which the rapid importation and cruel treatment of the Negroes brought about—if the French had been successful in their attempts to restore the dominion of civilized men in the revolted settlement—still the ineffable horrors of the fourteen years during which the contest raged, would have justified us in viewing with increased antipathy the African Slave Trade, the cause of so many wide spread calamities.—The predictions of those who foretold that insurrection was the natural consequence of the Negro importation, would have been abundantly verified ;
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they would have had full reason for reminding us how accurately they had foretold even the manner in which that cause of rebellion must operate, and for once more raising their voice against a system which during the very discussion of its merits, was giving such tremendous proofs of its destructive power. But, unhappily, the events of the Negro War have led to a revolution, complete, and in all appearance permanent; connected with the Slave Trade more nearly than as a warning example, and calculated to prescribe, with more than the force of a mere argument, the necessity of instantly abolishing that destructive commerce.

In the middle of the Slave Colonies, almost within the visible horizon of our largest island, a commonwealth of savage Africans is at this moment established, inspired with irreconcilable enmity to all that bears the name of Negro Bondage, and a rooted horror of that subordinate state which their efforts have enabled them to shake off. Does any one imagine that the Slaves of Jamaica are ignorant of the proud superiority of their free brethren on the opposite shore? Is it probable that they now kiss with more devotion than ever, the chains which their fellow Slaves in the
next

next settlement have triumphantly broken? Admitting that our Colonies are safe from the risk of being attacked by the new Negro Power, —an attack which in all probability would be joined by every discontented, and every newly imported Slave—is not the constant example of the neighbouring island a sufficient reason for deprecating, beyond every thing, the maltreatment of Slaves, the disproportion of whites, the increase of unseasoned Negroes, which are the necessary consequences of continuing the African Trade? When the enemy's forces are besieging you, is it prudent to excite mutiny in your garrison, and to admit into the heart of your fortress the best allies that your enemy has?—When the fire is raging to windward, is it the proper time for stirring up every thing that is combustible in your warehouses, and throwing into them new loads of materials still more prone to explosion? Surely, surely, these most obvious considerations, need but be hinted at, to demonstrate, that independent of every other argument against the Negro traffic, the present state of the French West Indies renders the idea of continuing its existence for another hour worse than insanity. Were there not another objection

objection to the commerce, the revolution of St. Domingo is enough, both as a sad monument of its fatal tendency, and as an event which has unfortunately changed the very nature of the case; aggravating, a thousand fold, every danger wherewith the system was originally pregnant. The planters have now to chide between the surrender of the Slave Trade, and the sacrifice of their possessions—between the civilization of Africa, and the lasting barbarism of the West Indies—between the peaceful improvement of the Negroes in their own country, and the masterful domination of savage men in the American islands—between the immediate, total Abolition of the Slave Trade, and the Abolition of that Slavery, which alone can preserve the existence of white men in the Charaibean sea. That there is no other alternative, the late history of the West Indies proves in every page.

By the unspeakably mournful events, of that story—by the nameless horrors of Negro warfare—by the lives of all their kindred in the New World—by the wealth and grandeur of England, for which they have so often and so generously bled—by the existence of the Eu-
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ropean name in those fair regions where it has
 shone for ages with such brilliant lustre—the
 planters are now solemnly implored to prevent a
 catastrophe dreadful beyond the language of man
 to paint. *Hitherto* the cause of the Africans
 has appeared, in their eyes, to be at variance
 with the cause of their countrymen; otherwise
 it would surely, even on its own merits, have
 been pleaded with success.—*Now*, the very same
 suit is plainly urged for both—May it not be
 preferred in vain!

TINIS.

THOUGHTS
ON THE
OLD AND NEW
ADMINISTRATIONS.

THOUGHTS,

ON THE

OLD AND NEW

ADMINISTRATIONS,

WITH

A Comparative View,

OF

THEIR CLAIMS TO PUBLIC FAVOR.

BY A CIVIL VOLUNTEER.

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GRAPHICAL

GRAPHICAL remarks will also form a part of this division; the one divested of insipid dryness, and the other of methodical enumeration. **ANTIQUITIES**, which may tend to illustrate the history of individuals, or dispel the cloud which may envelope the manners of past ages, will not be deemed unfitting. **MISCELLANEOUS CRITICISM** will likewise find a place in the *Universal Magazine*, as well as **ORIGINAL ESSAYS**, and other communications on subjects of literature in general. And to this department do we particularly invite the communications of correspondents, who will always find their favors judged with candour, and inserted with impartial promptitude.

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* * Any former Numbers may be had, from the commencement in June 1747.

Thoughts

ON THE

OLD AND NEW

ADMINISTRATIONS.

WE are enjoined not to speak ill of the dead. This restraint on posthumous censure, if ever proper, must be understood as applying only in favour of the ashes of individuals, who, being of little note when living, should be permitted to rest without the disturbance of private resentment, but cannot be supposed to extend to public bodies, or the members of a State, whose actions having been of high importance to society, have ever been deemed fit objects for historic animadversion. If such be the case with

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those who have been long committed to the grave, it cannot be thought a violation of decorum to examine the conduct of others, who, being only politically defunct, have, doubtless, left behind them friends enough, who in hope of their resurrection, will lend themselves to their defence; a service seldom bestowed upon such as are gone beyond the possibility of recal. Under this licence it is that I enter into an examination of the conduct of our late Ministers, in order to contrast it with that of their successors.

The late administration was made up of very discordant materials: the heads of it having been long engaged in acrimonious opposition, it would have seemed strange, that they should ever have been compacted into one mass, had not numerous precedents prepared us for the possibility of such an union.

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The chief of that administration carried much to it in the lustre of his name, and the powers of his understanding.— Had it been his good fortune to have fallen into better company, or to have maintained, when with them, the same inflexible adherence, which he manifested elsewhere to his own opinions, he would perhaps have avoided many of those errors into which he was misled by the violence of his colleagues, and have preserved a better claim to the public esteem than what he now enjoys : as it is, he must be contented to partake with them that odium which results from the worst system of measures, that has issued from any cabinet since the reign of the unfortunate James.

One of their first acts upon which I have to remark, is the late war with France, which, if not actually solicited on our part, as many have contended, was
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certainly not avoided, as it might have been, with a little temper, and diplomatic address.

France it is true was turbulent, and to her neighbours a little rude; but she was so, only because exasperated by the declared enmity of two great continental powers, and the secret machinations of others equally hostile. She was, besides, in the crisis of a revolution, in magnitude unexampled in the annals of the world. If, on such an occasion, the fermentation of spirits, not otherwise much disposed to be temperate, should have broken forth in frothy and insulting declamation, it might have been overlooked in consideration of the transitoriness of her ruling factions, which succeeded to each other with the rapidity of objects dancing in a camera, and were too evanescent to provoke our anger. But Mr. Burke had sounded, with a powerful blast, the trumpet

trumpet of alarm. He told us that war was necessary, and certainly he was much better paid for the fatal counsel, than he had before been for much wiser opinions, which could not obtain even the honour of a patient hearing.

War was, therefore, declared, and soon after, it was pronounced, by those who partook the opinions of Mr. Burke, to be an interminable war.

Wise Ministers, before they embrace the desperate expedient of having recourse to arms, generally reflect, not only on the provocation which they may have received, but also on the probable consequences that may ensue from their use. If they have reason to think the issue may be unfavorable, though the cause be just, they will temporize, and even digest an insult, which cannot be resented with effect. On this head, therefore, they either reasoned not at all, or they

they reasoned ill ; for if they had condescended to have turned their eyes upon those pages of history which are occupied with the revolutions of nations, they would have been apprised of the terrible effects that were to be expected from the enthusiasm of so great a people as the French, combating, as they were instructed to believe, in the defence of their newly acquired liberty. They would have calculated less on the power of the confederacy, strong as it appeared to be, than on the energy of the resistance ; and would have embraced in their reflections the possible desertion of allies, of incompatible interests, momentarily united, and perhaps only assuming the semblance of union, the more effectually to deceive and to betray each other. If all these reflections escaped our Ministers, as they appear to have done, they were ill fitted for the important stations
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in which they were unfortunately placed. But if they erred thus fundamentally in the formation of their designs, they did so still more in the means which they employed for their execution; for excepting our conquests out of Europe, where scarcely the shadow of an enemy presented to oppose them, all the rest was discomfiture and miscarriage; and that not so much arising from the invincible force of the enemy, as from the wretched combination of our own plans. It would be inconsistent with the brevity proposed to be observed in this work, to enter into a minute detail of the errors which led to our successive defeats; but if we take a geographical survey of the different points to which our attacks were directed, from the Helder, in the North, where we were obliged to ransom our rear-guard of eight thousand men, to Toulon, in the South, whence we escaped with

with somewhat better fortune, we shall find irresistible reasons to conclude either that our Generals were remiss in the performance of their duty, or that our Ministers were unwise in the formation of the plans which they committed to their execution. If the former, no doubt they would have vindicated themselves from the reproaches attendant on miscarriage, by resigning their officers to the scrutinies which were repeatedly moved for in Parliament; but by refusing so to do, and in resisting every enquiry when questions of that nature were proposed, they seemed plainly to intimate an apprehension that enquiry, if granted, might lead to discoveries tending to their own disgrace, from which they hoped to escape by covering their proceedings with the veil of a parliamentary *superstition*.

In that respect, indeed, no man was ever better served than Mr. Pitt. He furnished

nished the arguments, and his friends the conclusion. Whatever was defective in the one, was sure to be supplied by the other. His parliamentary majority was an effectual panacea for the cure of every ministerial disorder.

I have mentioned only two points at the extremes of the Continent, where repulse attended our attempts; but were I disposed to enlarge in detail, I might enumerate many more, in the intermediate space, where we were equally unsuccessful; as at Ostend, at Dunkirk, at Quiberon, at Ferrol, and at Corsica. The expedition to Teneriffe, I believe, was not theirs, but Lord St. Vincent's; and there, where no galleons were to be found, even the intrepidity of Nelson could not ensure a victory.

On the other hand, if Ireland was preserved from the attacks of the enemy, it was not by the wise provision made by Ministers

Ministers for its defence, but by the winds, which generously lent their aid for its rescue. Had Hoche landed his army in that island, when he made an effort so to do, what power was there of moral force to contest the country with him? Tremble at a consequence escaped only by fortuitous interposition!

But if our Ministers miscarried in so many of their attempts against the enemy, they must be allowed to have been very successful in their domestic warfare. A campaign seldom passed over, without their obtaining some signal triumphs over the subjects of their own state: their suspension of the Habeas Corpus, their Bills of Sedition, which, under the pretext of obviating disturbances, effectually silenced even those animadversions in which we had ever been privileged to indulge; their imprisonments, without charges; their prosecutions, without con-

diction:

viction; and their convictions without proofs, are so many memorable instances of their tyrannies, which will be long remembered, and are now recalled with the greater detestation, by the contrast which we are compelled to draw between their conduct and that of their successors.

If, in speaking of the late Administration, I have mentioned only the name of Mr. Pitt, it is because under that name was comprised all the excellence which rendered it, at any time, respectable, or obtained for it any degree of the public favour; but even that gentleman's most valuable endowment was his eloquence; that transcendent, it is true; but were we to shut our ears to the seductions of his discourse, and to look only to his measures, we shall meet abundant reason to acknowledge, that there never was so much practical folly, united

to such speculative wisdom.' His friends say that he was unfortunate. I admit that he was unfortunate in the connexions which he formed, but he was unwise in forming those connexions ; and granting all that can be said in palliation of errors too numerous to be overlooked, yet, as he was the head and soul of his party, he must be held as peculiarly responsible for measures which he must be supposed to have directed ; and as those measures exhibit such a train of miscarriages, we are compelled to acknowledge imbecility of execution at least, if not of design ; and as the renown of his great father was largely derived from the series of successes attendant on his plans, it is not unfair, from a parity of reasoning, to infer a defect of wisdom in the son, from uniformity of miscarriage.

The ingratitude of the Athenians to their most illustrious citizens, who had served

served them well, in subjecting them to the ostracism, has furnished a theme of eternal reproach to that enlightened people; but no reproach could be more unjustly applied, for it was not ingratitude, but a wise regard to their independence, which dictated the necessary measures. They knew early what we have learned late, that statesmen, like other servants, though at first they enter into place with modest claims, and good characters, are yet apt, by a long continuance therein, to become insolent and vain, erecting themselves into tyrants, and controlling their masters, by whose wages they are subsisted. Twenty years of ministerial rule, with its concomitant patronage, are enough to intoxicate the most happily organized head; whilst that of a city alderman so topples with the brief honours of a mayoralty, as to be long in recovering its natural balance.

Some effect of that kind may, perhaps, have been experienced by Mr. Pitt. He was so long on our shoulders, that he began to think himself taller than the rest of the nation. When, therefore, I rejoice in finding him once more merged into ~~the~~, and restored to the use of his own legs, it is from a hope that he will profit by his experience, and that if ever he should return to power, it will be with chastized pretensions.

But, indeed, in what situation can Mr. Pitt be placed, where his services are more likely to benefit the nation, than that wherein we now behold him? As the ruler of a state, in turbulent times, he has been tried, and miscarried. As a parliamentary tactician, his abilities have been universally acknowledged: to tactics, therefore, let all the powers of his ample mind be hereafter devoted, and we may indulge a reasonable hope, that

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one of these days, he will turn out an accomplished general. Command being his delight, when his Cinque Port Volunteers are drilled to the same perfection of discipline that formerly distinguished his other troops, I trust we shall find in him and them, an impenetrable rampart against the attacks of the enemy. I subscribe, therefore, without reluctance, to the praise which his activity has obtained, in preparing for the ensuing conflict; though, in so doing, he has only acquitted himself of a duty peculiarly incumbent on him, as one of the principal causes of our being placed in the perilous situation wherein we now are. To the last war has been undoubtedly owing the prodigious aggrandizement of France, which now overawes all her continental neighbours, and so threatens us, that we are obliged, in our defence, to become an armed nation; and (as it is)

be feared) of purchasing our political security at the expence of our moral degradation.

It has been asked, "Why we are at war?" The answer is easy: We are at war now, because we were so then; without that, this would not have been necessary; for had we not coalesced, there would have been no coalition; Europe would have been free, and France within her ancient limits, distracted by internal convulsions, and anxious only for the settlement of her own affairs.

When I impute this to Mr. Pitt, it is not that I mean to exclude others, infinitely more guilty, from the reproaches which I address to him only, as being the foreman of the Cabinet, and the organ of their decisions, many of which, there is reason to think, he did not internally approve. Mr. Windham did not, as he has very honestly told us; but that

was when there was any tendency in the Cabinet to a peace; and if his candour be remembered, I hope the occasion that extorted it will not be forgotten.

Mr. Pitt had a very able second in the House of Commons, in Mr. Dundas, now Lord Melville, a gentleman possessed of the accumulated experience of half a dozen administrations, of which he formed a part, and who was still so little fatigued with his past labours, that he had no objection to have taken a share with the present one also, as we are told in the "Cursory Remarks;" but his negotiation having failed, he has since withdrawn to the North, where it is not to be supposed that a spirit like his, will long remain in inglorious inaction. Indeed his presence there seems to have been already manifested by its effect on the Far Faction, which had so long lain dormant in that part of the Kingdom, but which

her head ; and it is difficult to discover whether it be Mr. Addington or Bonaparte that she most threatens with her hostilities. It seems as if an apprehension had gone abroad, that, by the absence of that noble person from the Administration, the loaves and fishes, which used to frequent that coast, have escaped from their natural latitude, and all wits are at work, to recover them back again. Even the grave Judges, who have heretofore devoted all their faculties (certainly not too much) to subjects appertaining to their profession, now bestow a portion of them on the science of politics, and instruct us how kingdoms are to be best defended. They feel, or affect, an extraordinary alarm for their dear country, which they represent as being the most threatened by the enemy ; but their southern neighbours, who have their eyes turned upon the fields on this side of

of the Tweed, do more justice to the judgment of their enemies, and suppose that their unerring instinct will guide them to a more productive range of depredation.

One of the learned Lords, more forward in this business than the rest, being somewhat aware that the origin of his motions might be misconstrued, has been at singular pains to repel (by anticipation) the charge of his having acted under influence. He claims all the odium exclusively to himself; and it would be unkind to deny him so reasonable a gratification: Lord Meadowbank shall be acknowledged to have deserved the worst that can be said of a man, who, at this juncture, endeavours to sow discontents against the Government, by telling his countrymen that they are neglected. Were we less disposed to give credit to his declarations, we should certainly have suspected,

pected, from his speeches, somewhat like the dawnings of an opposition, originating in a quarter still higher than the Bench.

To Lord Grenville, another of our late Ministers, I attribute all the praise that is due to a man, to whom nature refused every thing but the power of perseverance, but who, by the exertion of that useful faculty, has obtained political instruction enough to qualify him for a subordinate place in any administration, where detail only is required; but not to guide a State, constructed like ours, on a basis of liberal freedom. Higher he ought not to aim; yet, by his activity in opposition, it seems as if he had not abandoned the hope of recovering all that he has lost. Heaven grant that he may be disappointed of his wishes, if such they be!

But of all the members that composed the late Administration, Mr. Windham is
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the one whose return to power the nation ought to contemplate with the greatest apprehension; and yet his anxiety to obtain it has placed him at the head of an opposition, though opposition in a man who, like him, is so generally in the wrong, of itself presumes rectitude in the party whom he opposes. Upon every occasion he has uniformly recommended the most violent measures, and has testified an abhorrence of every thing like pacific accommodation. He sets little value either upon human life, or human opinions, and hates liberty, the militia, and the volunteers, as he loves despotism and a standing army; and finding, in the conduct of the present administration, the severest censures of his own, he has sworn their destruction; and thinks no instrument too vile to accomplish it. Should his wishes be so far realized, let him not be
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the man who is to succeed to their places ; for Cobbett's pages, should it be their undeserved fate to escape the spoil of the Pastry-cook, will exhibit a faithful record of sentiments, proving how much fitter he is to be the Minister of a Despot, than of the mild Sovereign of Imperial Britain.

In Lord Spenser, had he not been one of the promoters of the late war, I should have seen but little to condemn ; for much is to be approved in his Administration of the Navy. He took it with energies exhausted from the torpid hands of his predecessor Lord Chatham, and raised it to an eminence which it had never before attained. Through the whole war whatever was effected, with very few exceptions, was by the instrumentality of the Navy under his direction. They, indeed, achieved glorious things ; yet could not his subsequent conduct

conduct atone for his original error in leading us to the labyrinth of misery in which we are now entangled, and from which there appears no visible outlet.

As to the other members of the late Administration, they are but little indebted to notice, either individually or collectively; for as they always remained in the back ground, it would be cruel to draw from thence merely to exhibit them as objects of detestation. By yielding their places to better men, and greater lovers of their country, they have made some little atonement for their past errors; and as it is the only one they are able to make, we will accept it in composition of their debt, and absolve them like bankrupts from all future claims, provided they make no fresh endeavours to emerge from the obscurity in which nature originally designed them to have remained. 11

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The same amnesty, might, perhaps, have been extended to the principals of the party, had they not foreclosed themselves of the benefit of such a grace, by their movement in obstructing the measures of the present administration, and by their efforts to render them as odious as they themselves deserve to be.

Some of them, indeed, have been too wise to appear openly in the ranks of opposition. Like Sharp-Shooters they direct their attacks from behind the covert of trees and hedges; but they are discovered by the smoke that surrounds them, and the activity of the emissaries who are employed in the fabrication of calumny, of which the most copious torrent has flowed from a pen so long hacknied in that kind of work, as to accredit any character to which his attacks are directed. Had the Political Register

Register no other contributor than the person whose name is prefixed, I should never have descended to have mentioned it; for imprudent must that contest be, where, from the meanness of the antagonist, even victory would be a disgrace; but as Mr. Windham has given his imprimatur to the sentiments contained in it, and which appear so analogous to those which he has delivered elsewhere, as to leave no doubt of his paternity, they acquire an importance which give them some better title to our notice.

Mr. Windham, to whom I return again with pleasure, is a gentleman who might be read and heard without disgust, if he placed his glory less in a defiance of common sense. No thesis, however repugnant to it, being too difficult for him to attempt to support. Boxing and Bull-Baiting have been honoured with his panegyrics; and laborious have been his

his efforts to recover the nation to a taste for barbarous pastimes, with a view to invigorate their courage. As Rousséau acquired a reputation by his paradoxes, so Mr. Windham hopes to obtain one, too; but great as his dexterity in perplexing truth may be, he is still far short of his original, and will be late in arriving at an equal eminence of fame, though he may meet all the odium attached to the endeavour.

To deny him the little merit which can result from eloquence, not regulated by discretion, is to withhold that which, if granted, would speak very little in his praise, for if mere eloquence could have made a great man, Lord Rosslyn would not have been so far removed from that character; and yet the best speech he ever made, and one which, perhaps, was never exceeded in power of words, lost America to this country, so dangerous

is it to talk well without thinking justly !

As Mr. Windham was one of the principal causes of our being alarmed into the late war, (not war only, but even such contentions as any ways resemble it, being his delight,) it is no wonder that when the Peace came which deprived him of so pleasant a source of gratification, and, necessarily, preceded as it was by the loss of his place, that we should find him among the loudest and most virulent declaimers against the administration, who have done him this double injury ; accordingly he leads the opposition in the lower house, and imagining that full justice cannot be done to speeches so excellent as his own, by a simple report of the text, he has retained a commentator in his service, whose special duty it is to palliate such passages as have issued so rapidly from his brain,

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to expound others whose metaphysical obscurity stands in need of illustration, to prevent the whole from sliding into oblivion by incessant repetitions, and to vilify his enemies.

For this latter service, who so fit as the Editor of the Political Register? He had no delicacies to overrule, no scruples to subdue; he had no occasion to harrass invention for abusive epithets; they were his vernacular idiom, the patrimony of his birth, improved by education in his early youth, and perfected in manhood by the production of twelve volumes of the most venomous libels that ever disgraced the press. Nature could not have supplied an instrument more appropriate to Mr. Windham's purposes. This honourable office being conferred upon Mr. Cobbett, well does he repay the confidence reposed in him by the zeal with which he fulfils the trust.

Of all the qualifications requisite to a Political Journalist, impudence is unquestionably the most useful; as it defies reason and fact, and there is no convicting it to the humiliation of a blush.

Without this power who could have hazarded the strange dogmas which we meet with in that factious print? such as that parliamentary proceedings ought not to be reported by the Press; that the Press itself is a hurtful engine; that a national bankruptcy is not only a desirable thing, but an event absolutely necessary to the salvation of the country. Indeed, he carries his indignation on this head so far, that he quarrels with the patriotic society for their endeavours to uphold the funds, even by a purchase. I should apprehend that this Mr. Cobbett must stand pretty clear from any criminal connexion with those funds which he thus labours to depreciate, or he must
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be very ungrateful for the benefits which they confer upon him.

His batteries are levelled also at every other operation of the Bank. Their notes are his abhorrence, and there is reason to apprehend, that in his further progress in reform, even the precious metals, gold and silver, will be banished from the commonwealth; and that, like that other lawgiver of old, he will be for supplying their place with some of his more precious brass.

That commerce may be resigned to perdition, we know to be the respectable opinion of Mr. Windham; and indeed what share he may have had, in the other rants of fancy contained in that work, and what Mr. Cobbett, it is rather difficult to ascertain, though we have reason to imagine that no sentiment would have obtained a place therein, of which the Right Honourable Gentleman much disapproved.

approved. It is impossible however, to reconcile to such an idea the invectives uttered in the same work, against the Volunteer Army; for though they are not a part of our defence which he contemplates with satisfaction, yet as he has condescended to enrol himself among them, he, surely, would not consent that they should be stigmatized with the epithet of cowards, whom flagellation only could persuade to fight. Indeed I admit, that though this term be at first collectively applied, it is afterwards qualified by certain wholesome exceptions, just sufficient to obviate disagreeable discussion. In short, it is strange to think, when a man has got his goose-quill in his hand, and is in a happy mood for reform, what havoc he will make with received opinions; how he will brush them away, like cobwebs with

with the feather, whilst, with the pen he traces plans of infallible wisdom !

Of our present Ministers I once thought not so favourably as at present. I considered them as being the occasional substitutes of those who preceded them ; but since I find that they stand on more independent ground, and that they have been honoured not only with the asperities of Mr. Pitt's friends, but with the sarcasms of Mr. Pitt himself, I entertain a much better hope of them.

The peace, their first measure, had the full approbation of my soul ; though some doubt might remain of its permanency from the enormous power of the enemy with whom we had contended, and the ambition of the chief who directs their affairs. I should imagine, that it was never considered, by any man, otherwise than as a peace of experiment, entered

tered into on the part of our Ministers, with a most anxious wish to extend its duration, if they found our adversaries possessed of the same amicable views, or to resume hostilities, if circumstances demanded them. Most deeply is it to be regretted that they have so done; yet, short as the peace has been, it was well worth all the sacrifices made to obtain it, were it only in having freed the nation from the former unjust war, and thereby converted us from aggressors into defenders. It has afforded to Europe, by the magnitude of our concessions, an unequivocal proof of our pacific disposition; and, which is of still more value, it has united us among ourselves (before divided) into one homogeneous sentiment, as to the equity of the contest in which we are now engaged.

Nor have other fruits been wanting from the peace, as it has destroyed

one army of the enemy, and that not a small one, by their enterprize against Saint Domingo ; put in peril their fleet ; given a fatal blow to their reviving commerce ; and drawn out of their exchequer, much larger sums than the pillage of Hanover can ever replace.

Yet, had none of these advantages resulted from the peace, still there was found one, much greater, in the sixteen months respite from the calamities attendant on war ; happy interval ! for of all the evils with which mankind are afflicted that doubtless must be considered as the greatest.

As to the objections to the peace, on what were they founded ? on the restitution of the greatest part of our conquests to the enemy : but let it be remembered, that those conquests were, almost all, obtained without the effusion of blood ; and will, probably, be recovered again with equal

equal facility, whenever our disposable force shall enable us to look for foreign conquests: several of those, which we restored to the enemy, having already returned to our dominion, and the rest waiting in anxious expectation of the grateful summons. .

But should it even cost us many lives and much money to get back again what we abandoned at the peace, still shall we be enormous gainers by the sixteen months cessation of colonial warfare, every month of which, had that continued, would have cost us more both in men and money, than will now be expended on their re-capture. In short, we have gained every thing by the peace, but duration, which it was not in our power to command, and lost nothing, but the approbation of Mr. Windham and Lord Grenville, not worth the possessing.

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The only shadow of an objection that could be made to it, was with regard to the circumstances under which the peace was made ; which, being precisely at the period when the enemy had assumed an attitude that threatened us with an invasion, seemed to intimate that it was the result of our apprehension of the consequence. Possibly such an inference might have passed in the mind of a vain enemy ; but our Ministers are not responsible for the conclusions which vanity may suggest. They remitted the experiment to another occasion, which is now arrived ; and I doubt not but, when tried, it will recal the enemy from their error.

We have reason to say, that the peace was received by the almost universal approbation of the country. If there were any dissentients from the joy which that event inspired, their windows paid for

for their perverseness. Yet there were some, and though but few, they endeavoured to make up for the weakness of their number, by the vehemence of their clamours.

They remind us that they foretold, from the first, the consequences that were to ensue from the peace, and assume much merit from the verification of their predictions. 'These prophets are very sagacious beings;—they foresaw at what hour the sun ought to shine!!

Do they imagine that our Ministers, because their official situations bound them to a greater respect for decorum towards a person with whom they had so lately made a peace, were without apprehension of its early interruption, because their language intimated another opinion? Do they think that all the possible dangers were not in their minds, because not always on their tongues?

Insensate

Insensate conclusion ! Mr. Windham is too wise to make it, though political, annoyance being his object, he wishes it to be made by others.

The fact is, it was not so much the peace they hated, as the peace-makers ; and even them they hate less, than they love their places ; for if they were enraged only by the peace, they ought to be reconciled now that war is come again ; yet it seems they are as angry as ever ; not because we have a war, but because they have not the conducting of it ; being desirous, no doubt, of retrieving their characters by new experiments, which are to prove that they are grown wiser by their miscarriages : and if it were in a matter less important than our existence as a nation, it might be generous to indulge them ; but, as it is, we will remain as we are, under an assurance, that it is impossible to be worse than we have been.

But

But the short experience which we have had of our present Ministers, affords us better hopes. It tells us, that we are not likely at least, to be oppressed by vexatious laws, such as were enacted under the ministry of their predecessors. We have no suspensions of the Habeas Corpus ;—no sedition bills to silence animadversion on their misrule. Even Cobbett continues to emit his weekly libels, and no one thinks of sending him to Clerkenwell, though all acknowledge that his desmerits might well entitle him to such an accommodation. When Treason stalked abroad, and conspired against the anointed head of the Sovereign, they only were pursued to the scaffold, of whose guilt there could remain not the vestige of a doubt. Justice was satisfied with her lawful victims, sparing some even of them, and left the nation free as before. When rebellion had erected her
standard

standard in the sister kingdom, and the streets of her capital were dyed with the blood of the chief of the law, even that horrid outrage, was incapable of moving our Ministers from the rectitude of their purpose. The guilty were separated from the imprudent, the imprudent from the innocent, and none suffered but upon the clearest conviction of their peers. How different this from the rigor practised during the former rebellion in that unfortunate country? If Ireland had been always thus temperately treated, we should probably, have heard less of those violences which brought so many of her citizens to an ignominious death.

What have been the consequences of these wise measures?—The prisons go untenanted of state criminals—we hear no more of corresponding societies, couching guilty purposes under the semblance of reform. The laws being allowed their

their usual course, and men feeling themselves free as the constitution designed them to be, are a thousand times more attached to government than they could possibly have been under the rigorous restraints imposed upon them during the last war. The Sovereign moves not now, as before, in the silence of discontented subjects. His presence is hailed with acclamations of unfeigned joy. The people are his guards, and I doubt not, but that he will find, in an army of his Volunteers (discredited as they are attempted to be) the same energies of zeal for the defence of his realm, and the preservation of his sacred person, as he could do among his domestic attendants.

To what are we indebted for this salutary change in the public mind, but to the mildness and true wisdom of the present Administration, who prefer ruling
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by the ordinary maxims of the constitution, rather than by occasional laws of repulsive severity, which alienated the affections of men, and rendered them indifferent to a fate so bad, that it was hardly possible to be worse !!

Yet these are the men whom we are called upon to expel from the administration, as if we were tired of being happy, and had cause to wish for a change. The shafts darted at them, it is true, are not many; but those tipped with venom of uncommon malignity. Each of the Ministers has in his turn participated of their calumny; but the greatest portion of it has been directed to Mr. Addington, as to the most offensive object, from his holding the first place.

They tell us he is wanting in capacity, and certainly his incapacity is proved by the decency of the charge; but let it be

be remembered, that before he was a Minister, he was a man supposed to be endowed with every talent that could recommend him to public regard ; and if his powers are now impaired, it is only what is usual when men arrive at eminent stations, and have competitors who think they would better suit them. As the Speaker of the House of Commons, a function of no mean importance, and for which men of great abilities have always been selected, he acquitted himself with a dignity, wisdom, and impartiality, which so effectually conciliated all parties, that it was difficult to say, whether he was most esteemed by those by whom he was elected, or by those by whom he had been opposed. If more positive testimony be required in his favour, it will be found in the panegyrics of Mr. Pitt, by whom he was proposed for that chair ; therefore

we are reduced, by that circumstance, to the dilemma of admitting, either, that Mr. Addington must have been a man of wisdom, or Mr. Pitt a fool, to have given his confidence to one who so little deserved it.

But it seems that Mr. Pitt not only gave his confidence to Mr. Addington, the Speaker, but he also gave him his support and parliamentary influence after he had become Chancellor of the Exchequer, and if he has since seen reason to withdraw it, it must have been for some other reason than for the Peace, which he openly approved, or the present War which he approved also, and justified.

That Mr. Pitt should withdraw his friendship from Mr. Addington, on the score of incapacity, is therefore totally impossible; but it is not impossible that ~~he~~ may have discovered in a successor something

something that he would not have liked in any man, but least so in one who, having been brought forward, and advanced, (as it is said,) by his means, might have been expected in gratitude to have abandoned the Treasury when ever he was disposed to resume it. At the worst, therefore, it can only be said that Mr. Addington is wanting in gratitude.

But gratitude is a virtue which is not common in ordinary life; let us not then be surprised if it should be wanting in a statesman, where it never yet has been found, as history informs; therefore Mr. Addington, if ungrateful, has as good a right to be so as those who have preceeded him in political life, even as Mr. Pitt, who, in the commencement of his career, has been accused of having conducted himself with as little regard to his obligations to Lord Lansdown.

But

But as to the charge of ingratitude, upon what ground does that rest? on the circumstance of Mr. Pitt's having given his friendship to a man, whose highly estimable qualities irresistibly extorted it; and who returned it with equal affection; and when an equivalent is received, no debt can remain. As to the service rendered to Mr. Addington, by proposing him for the Speaker's chair; certainly that was conferred more in regard to the interest of the house, than to that of Mr. Addington; for if not, if Mr. Pitt proposed a person to so important a station, whom he did not think the best qualified to fill it, he abandoned his duty to an improper motive, and abused the influence which his station gave him to obtrude a person into the chair, which might have been better filled by another; a conclusion which I imagine Mr.

Pitt's

Pitt's friends will not be very ready to admit.

As to the next step of Mr. Addington's elevation, which was to the Treasury, for that I understand he was no further indebted to Mr. Pitt, than as Mr. Pitt, by vacating his seat at that board, gave Mr. Addington an opportunity to occupy it. What motive Mr. Pitt might have had for so doing, is not within the compass of my enquiry, further than to assure myself that it was not to accommodate Mr. Addington. I believe it has never been suspected that he did ; at the same time it has been perfectly well understood, that Mr. Addington's appointment did not proceed from Mr. Pitt, but from his Sovereign, who chose to be served, not to be commanded.

But if Mr. Addington had been more indebted than he really was to Mr. Pitt, for that appointment, it does not follow
that

that he accepted it in deposit with a promise of restitution whenever demanded. Indeed had he so done, his engagement would have been void, because entered into in contravention of a paramount duty to the public, who have a title to his services, and have been so well satisfied with those which he has already performed, as to be little disposed to relinquish their claim to others which they may hereafter receive from him.

It appears, therefore, from the above facts, if correctly stated, that Mr. Addington's obligations to Mr. Pitt are not of so high a nature as to impose on him the duty of an eternal pupilage. The addition of his name and talents to the present administration, would, no doubt, if disembarrassed from those colleagues who formerly urged him to his worst measures, have been accepted with pleasure,

sure; but when he thought proper to capitulate for their collective return, it is fortunate that his proposition was rejected, as I am persuaded that even his powers may be dispensed with without loss or injury to the public service*.

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* See "Cursory Remarks upon the State of Parties," where that matter is explained, and where we are told that, previous to the acceptance of the present Ministers, they had the promise of the last of "a constant, zealous, and active support."

The answer to the Cursory Remarks by "a more accurate Observer," does not deny the fact of the promise, but endeavours to palliate the breach of it.

In the simple apprehension of the world, as well as in the construction of statesmen, a promise of a systematic support of any administration, goes to all their measures, as a systematic opposition means an opposition to all measures, which is generally very honourably fulfilled. But the energetic adjuncts, "constant, zealous, and active," remove all doubt as to the nature of the obligation, and imply a pledge of a very cordial assistance. The question, therefore, is not whether an engagement to such a wide extent was wise or honest, but whether it was made; and that it was made is admitted. It must be admitted also to have been broken; by Lord Grenville immediate

The talents of Mr. Pitt, if inferred from their consequences, as I have before observed, are more fitted for discourse than for action. In eloquence, indeed, he is unequalled; but after all, what is there so admirable in eloquence, as to entitle it to the precedence which it has usurped over all the other faculties of the understanding, which, if duly appreciated, are of infinitely more value, as conducing to the happiness of society? at the best it is only a mind of

diately, and by Mr. Pitt somewhat later: all this in the ordinary habits of political fidelity.

The reader, who is desirous of knowing more how negotiations of that kind are generally conducted, and, particularly, how they were conducted by the father of Mr. Pitt, on a like occasion, may have his curiosity gratified by a perusal of Bubb Doddington's Diary, edited some twenty years ago, by a Mr. Windham, not the Ex-Secretary at War, but another of the same name, who seems to have been a very honest man, with these appropriate mottos:

Et tout pour la Trippe.—*Rabellais*.

And all for Quarter-Day.—*Diary*.

prompt

prompt production, which, with the aid of a flexible tongue, yields its contents with facility. It is not wisdom, though it may assume its type, and is more fitted to rule a rabble than to guide a state.

The orators of antiquity were well known to have been the worst citizens of every state, and I believe those of modern days do not much degenerate from the original character. Of all the productions of the intellect eloquence appears to be the most vendible. If it remains long in the market, it is because too great a price is demanded for it, though it often gets, at last, more than it is worth. It is not among these minor or venal Rhetoricians that Mr. Pitt is to be classed. He is certainly much above all pecuniary price, but he is not above ambition. Some of the wisest heads which this nation ever produced, never engaged in any parlia-

mentary discussion whatever ; whilst Cromwell, who is allowed to have been a man of deep project, was never known to have uttered three sentences of common sense in his life.

If, therefore, this quality of eloquence be of so little real value, in the science of government, it is a subject of regret that the same bounds are not prescribed to its effusions in Parliament, as formerly obtained among the club declaimers of this town, who were under the salutary restraint of the hammer ; for were that the case, the public business would be dispatched with much more expedition than at present, and thought would have its due preference over words. Wise plans are the result of judgment and reflection, and are matured in the unruffled recesses of the Cabinet, not in the tempest of debate ; for judgment digests its measures in silence : where most profound, it is
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the most taciturn; like the current of deep waters, which glide their course, without murmur or ebullition. The real power of the understanding is discovered by its palpable effects; as we recognize the perfection of the mechanism in the simplicity of its structure, and the regularity of its movements; not in the loudness of the noise produced by the friction of its parts.

In that respect, how much superior are our present Ministers to those who preceded them! Our ears are not importuned by elaborate harangues, calculated only to perplex the minds of an auditory, and in their perplexity, to surprise sanctions to measures which would never have been obtained if their objects had been distinctly discovered.

Where has more effective wisdom been displayed than in the military organization of the kingdom? Yet was it traversed

versed longer than decency would permit, not only by factious scribblers, but by others still more factious; whose object being to embarrass, care not at what injury that is to be effected. They predicted the total ruin of the country from the proposed mode of defence, though that defence is now considered to be so completely effectual, as to excite ardent wishes for the arrival of the enemy. My wish is, that if they do come, it may be in small numbers; for I hold the blood of my countrymen as being too precious to be unnecessarily expended, though victory were to be the assured result.

During the short period that Mr. Yorke was possessed of the war department, he displayed such talents in the development of his plans, and in his defence of them against all attacks, direct or oblique, which were levelled for their destruction, as shewed how much the nation

tion had gained by the change in that department, and that he was well qualified for the higher station which he now occupies.

Of Lord Hawkesbury I have not occasion to say much ; both because he has been but little attacked, and because he knows well how to defend himself. His answer to Mr. Pitt, on the subject of Mr. Patten's motion of censure, was, perhaps, the most eloquent reproof that right honourable gentleman ever received ; and, I shall be much mistaken, if it readily escapes from a memory so tenacious as his, of impressions once committed to it.

Of the navy, I can never speak but with admiration. It effects all that the caution of the enemy permits it to accomplish, notwithstanding the false and injurious reports which were circulated at the commencement of the war, of the
nullity

nullity of that part of the national force. It is to be wished, however, that so much gunpowder had not been wasted in the bombardment of their ports, but that it had been reserved for the purchase of more substantial advantages. Of the **First Lord**, who is now charged with its administration, I do not mean to say more than his merits deserve ; for I hear many murmurs against him, on the part of those who, being a step or two lower in the profession, are exposed to mortifications which generous spirits can ill endure. I have besides some recollection of charges preferred against him during the late war, which were never repelled by any arguments more satisfactory than a ministerial veto ; but as to the clamours excited by his reform of the naval arsenals, they confer great credit upon him, so far as the reform goes ; and it is to be regretted that it should extend only to the
dwarf

dwarf rogues of the State, and cease when it meets with gigantic delinquents, too great even for enquiry, and much too powerful for conviction. There are in our red book numerous offices, with which many of our noble families are acquainted, that could be very conveniently spared from its pages, or which, being curtailed of their salaries or perquisites, down to a reasonable compensation for actual services, would greatly accommodate the nation, and enable the minister to exonerate altogether that class of incomes, which are now only favoured with a smaller ratio of contribution. But this is departing from my subject.

When I see such energy displayed in every department of the State, as was never before known in this country, and behold men prodigal of their time, their money, and their lives, to avert the threatened danger, and submitting to such important

portant sacrifices, from their confidence in an Administration whose rule is in harmony with their feelings, I cannot conceal my surprise, or repress my indignation, at finding that there should be men so wicked, even at this perilous juncture, as to think only of their own miserable interests, and endeavouring to advance them, by depressing us into doubt and suspicion against those, who ought to possess our entire confidence; since with them we must either sink into servitude, or rise in glorious victory. The same old hacknied cant of opposition is now renewed, that has prevailed at all times, and sometimes but with too much effect, that the State is in danger, and will be ruined, if our Ministers are not removed from their places; which is as much as to say, in plain English, "Gentlemen, take us old Ministers back again, and all will be right."

Deplorable,

Deplorable, indeed, would it be, if this nation, formerly so exuberant of able men in every department of science, should be now so barren of talent, as to have what there is of it, limited to Mr. Pitt and his friends, and not to afford us a second set of Ministers capable of conducting our affairs. It would be a libel on nature to accuse her of such a niggard partiality; and however disposed men might have been, on the first change of the administration to have done her that injustice, I believe they are now very generally recalled from their error, to a full persuasion, that they possess in their present Ministers every thing they could desire, but the power of rectifying the mistakes of their predecessors.

Privations we must suffer, but, in suffering, let it be recollected to whom we are indebted for them: that it is not to
those

those who are now in place, though they impose them, but to those who occasioned the necessity, and entailed it as a legacy on succeeding generations. If we owe five hundred millions, three hundred of them were incurred by Mr. Pitt. If our taxes are of that magnitude, as not only to extract from us all our comforts, but to oblige us to a rigorous observance of lent throughout the year, it is the late administration who have placed us in that distressing predicament. If we entertain five hundred thousand armed men, they are no more than the relative situation of France to this country now imperiously requires. In short, whatever evils we now suffer, or hereafter may suffer, are to be fairly imputed to those who first raised, and then left us buffeted by the tempest: to the pilot who, instead of conducting the ship safely into harbour, as the song has falsely alleged, quitted

quitted her during the storm, and taking to his cock-boat, arrived safely at the Cinque ports, from whence looking out and seeing the vessel yet escaped from shipwreck, kindly proposes to resume the command, provided he may be accompanied by his old crew ; but never shall he have my vote until acquitted by the sentence of a court-martial, for his former dereliction ! nor even then, however contrite he may appear ; for though penitence may atone for sin, it cannot inspire hope, or afford a well-grounded assurance that our affairs would be better managed by them than they have before been.

No ! no ! let me not have those who have been tried and miscarried. If I am to suffer the yoke, let it be from hands that impose it with little violence. Such are our present ministers. Their system comprises nothing of vexation. In many instances

instances they have condescended even to public opinion; and wise have they been in so doing; for, by slight sacrifices, they have obtained the solid benefit of a chearful acquiescence to every measure which it has been found necessary to urge to execution.

This facility of concession has, however, been made a subject of reproach by their enemies; and the case of Mr. Horne Tooke's representative eligibility, particularly so to Mr. Addington; but, if any single circumstance in the conduct of that gentleman, could have impressed me with a decisive opinion of his temper and wisdom, that alone would have done it: for supposing the right of exclusion of Mr. Tooke to have been as clear in parliamentary principle, as it was obscure and dubious, yet as the precedents on which it was grounded were to be drawn from the remotest annals of that assembly,

and

and in their application might have produced much heat in the house; it was better to get rid of the question, as he did, by a delaratory law, which established the clerical disability in future, though it left Mr. Tooke in possession of his seat for the short residue of the Parliament. Surely this was not too much to be done, even in respect to the feelings of a gentleman, who, like the Parthians, is formidable in his retreat, and whose extraordinary endowments would almost apologise for the violation of an admitted principle.

That the late Ministry were without any weaknesses of this kind must certainly be acknowledged. Never were they known to have relaxed from a purpose which they had once resolved upon, in deference to the popular wish, however temperately expressed. They ruled as if they thought the true art of ruling consisted

consisted in opposing every desire of the people.

Another objection has been made to Mr. Addington, that he is not of illustrious extraction; and many witty allusions have been made to the profession of his father. Mr. Addington ought to feel grateful for the honour derived to him from a parent who adorned the liberal profession which he practised. He was the friend of the father of Mr. Pitt, and his greatest solace when smitten with pain and affliction in the declining years of his illustrious life. But alas! what earthly friendships can resist the force of political competition? Mr. Addington having the misfortune to please the King and the People; and, to become a Minister, must no longer indulge the hope of having the son of his father's friend for his friend. The hereditary union is dissolved, and all
must

must yield to the rankling jealousy of state ambition !!!

But if not to be noble be a reproach, how long is it since the family of Pitt have escaped it? Two generations have not yet elapsed since that auspicious epoch ; and the reproach to Mr. Addington, if any, may easily be effaced by the same royal favour which advanced him to the eminence he now occupies, and the family of Pitt to the title by which they are now distinguished.

But in a country such as this, where talents and virtue have their due estimation, it is not necessary that Mr. Addington, in order to be great, should be a Lord. The father of Mr. Pitt never could be little, but he was somewhat less when he became one, than he had been when a Commoner. An advance to the Peership has generally been considered as a retreat

from

from utility, and an honorary superannuation.

Another reproach has been made to Mr. Addington, that, in the day of his prosperity, he is not unmindful of those who were endeared to him in his youth, that he has remembered his friends, and promoted his relations.

What brother, who was not destitute of the most natural feelings of humanity, ever refused so to do when his friends and relations were men of talents and merit, as those of Mr. Addington are confessed to be? Has not every preceding Minister done the same? Did not Mr. Pitt provide for his brother? and does he not decline a power that now courts him, because his friends and relations are not to partake it with him? Did not Lord Melville extend his tenderness still farther, and embracing a whole country with his fraternal

fraternal arms, monopolize the patronage of three Kingdoms, and the two Indies to their use?

Let us hear no more then of reproaches like these, which have no better foundation than captious malignity, or ambitious selfishness, eager to injure, but impotent to effect its desire. The public will esteem Mr. Addington the more for identifying himself with them, for partaking their feelings, and respecting their prejudices. One cause of quarrel only they have with him, and that is for extending the influence of the crown; for as the most valuable prerogative of a Prince is to be beloved by his subjects, Mr. Addington has, within the short period of three years, carried that much further than any of his predecessors during the late, or present reign, were ever able to do. The mildness of the present administration has conciliated the affec-
tions

tions of the whole people to their Sovereign; and it is in gratitude for the happiness which we enjoy, that I commit these pages to the press. Mr. Addington knows me not, nor have I ever seen him but in the Speaker's chair. I am not within the reach of his remunerations were he disposed to afford them to me. I am too unambitious to court distinctions, too old to solicit a place, and too rich to want a dinner; and the praises which I give to him and his colleagues, if worth any thing, are gratuitously conferred, not suborned by a bribe.

F I N I S.

TENTH EDITION, CORRECTED.

A FEW

CURSORY REMARKS,

UPON THE STATE

OF

PARTIES, &c. &c.

A FEW
CURSORY REMARKS
UPON
THE STATE OF
PARTIES,
DURING
THE ADMINISTRATION
OF
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
HENRY ADDINGTON.
BY A NEAR OBSERVER.

Prodesse quàm placere.

THE TENTH EDITION, CORRECTED.

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TO THE

RIGHT HONOURABLE

HENRY ADDINGTON,

FIRST LORD COMMISSIONER OF THE TREASURY,

&c. &c.



SIR,

IF your principal friends and well-wishers have represented your character with as much truth as ability, and the portrait they have exhibited be not a mere *design*, without resemblance to nature, you will not consider every man as your enemy, who will not, or cannot flatter you; nor despise, nor resent any attempt to be of service because it is free from servility.

. . You

You must have observed, Mr. Addington, in the conduct of some of your predecessors, and you have doubtless remembered to your own advantage, how unprofitable and absurd it is to add insolence to power, and to think it a part of greatness to be hated. I understand that you are happier in your disposition, more manly in your friendships, more generous in your sentiments, and that to the frankness and probity of your public character, you join the virtues and the manners of elegant and domestic life—May these good qualities of your nature, Sir, be neither corrupted by honours and success, nor soured by disappointment and ingratitude !

The following reflections are intended with much good-will to you and your administration ; but I am far from promising that every page shall sooth your vanity, or promote your wishes, or coincide with your opinions. I cannot be your friend and your flatterer too.

I think,

I think, however, that these remarks will, perhaps, do some service; otherwise, in the present danger and inconvenience of our public circumstances, I should not think it warrantable to interfere.

I have the Honour to be,

Sir,

&c. &c.

A NEAR OBSERVER.

London, Sept. 5,
1803.

A FEW
CURSORY REMARKS,

&c. &c.



THE surprise and consternation with which the public received intelligence of the resignation of his Majesty's late Ministers, in February 1801, are not yet forgotten. The state of the country at that time, and in consequence of that event, forms one of the most extraordinary and memorable epochas of its history.

Fatigued, discouraged, and almost exhausted, with the efforts, events, and burthens, of nine years of the revolutionary war, it was in vain that the nation endeavoured with straining eyes to gather a ray of hope in that vast horizon where the Sun of Peace seemed set for ever. The flashes of victory itself threw but a trembling and meteor light, too feeble to pierce the darkness that seemed to brood over Europe.

Deserted by every ally (but such as were our burthen and our weakness) we had seen the
subju-

subjugation of the best half of the Continent ratified at Lunéville. The strength, the spirit, and the character of the House of Austria were subdued and broken; and its mutilated power removed as it were by the fabulous spell of an enchanter, from the Banks of the Scheldt and Rhine, to the distant shores of the Adriatic. The German Empire, a shapeless and inanimate mass, already mulcted and amerced of some of its fairest principalities, awaited the consummation of its fate at Ratisbon, in the silence of despair; while the King of Prussia, without a body of nobility, of prelates, or of magistrates, and *appearing* only to command his corrupted generals, and jacobin court, was glad to be bribed into a system which he had neither the courage nor the power to resist. So much wiser is it in the present constitution of the world, to seem treacherous, ambitious, profligate, any thing—than weak.

Russia, whose gallant armies had so lately combated, at our side, under the influence of her unhappy Czar, and of the more insane and deranged spirit of commercial avarice and fraud, now appeared against us at the head of a mighty confederation in the North; British blood had stained the channel, and the quarrel had been compromised without satisfaction or atonement by an evasive and disgraceful convention, signed at Copenhagen in the presence of our fleet!

Th ·

The rest of the Continent was France—Spain, Italy, Piedmont, Switzerland, the courses of the Lower Rhine into the ocean, the Seven United Provinces, the Low Countries were absorbed. By treaty or by terror, by influence or by force, they had become members and departments of the great nation; their ships, their soldiers, their commerce, and their revenues, were at her disposal; and a power so enormous as was never yet concentrated by any league or confederation of independent sovereigns and states, was now amassed and converged in a single arm; flushed with victory, goaded by disappointments, and directed by rancour and ambition against the shores of Great Britain. What part of the civilized world was there not in arms against us, or preparing to arm, when the late ministers gave in their resignation?

Was our domestic state more happy or serene, and our internal position more smooth and favourable for the retreat of ministers, weary, no doubt, of the fatigues of office, and cloyed with the duration of their power? I throw a veil over the malady of our beloved Sovereign, who never gave pain to his subjects but when they trembled for his life. But the future historian of this eventful era will make it his care to dwell upon a calamity which heightened every terror in our circumstance, and more than redoubled every other calamity. The artifices

fices of party and the unhappy success of so many expensive expeditions, had entirely discouraged and indisposed the country towards offensive operations; and the unfortunate orders which had caused the violation of the Treaty of *El-Arisch*, and (at the expence of the massacre of the Turkish army) detained the conquerors of Egypt in that important province, had created the highest distrust and dissatisfaction as to the conduct of the war, and the capacity of the persons entrusted with it. The war itself, too, of which the true nature and character, had been early mistaken*, and of which the principle and objects had so repeatedly appeared to change, had now grown unpopular and hopeless; witness the single disappointment received at *Ferrol*, which caused more discontent and despondency than, at earlier periods of the war, had arisen from all our mistakes and misfortunes in St. Domingo, Corsica, Quiberon, and North-Holland. An expedition, indeed, was prepared to retrieve our master-error in Egypt, and a fleet to assist our negotiations with the Northern Powers: but in describing the period I have undertaken, it were unjust to dissemble, that no minister could have been sanguine enough to expect their success. In the Baltic, a fleet had already appeared under the command of Admiral Dickson, to support a demand of sa-

* At Valenciennes and Dunkirk.

tisfaction for the injury we had received in our own seas, from a Danish frigate (the Freya). That gallant Admiral however had no orders which could save him the pain of witnessing, and Lord Whitworth no instructions which could spare him the necessity of signing, a treaty of *Adjournment*, at the expense of some implied and virtual admissions*, which, in happier times, could never have been extorted from a British Cabinet. As to the recovery of Egypt, even now that it has pleased Providence to bless the valour of his Majesty's arms with such glorious success, it is impossible to deny the great inadequacy, shall I say, or the total incompetency of that expedition to its object; or to think that it deserved or could have been crowned with victory, according to human computation and probability†. These remarks are not voluntary, much less designed to mortify the vanity of any statesman, or to defeat the political *post-liminium*, by which the late Government now claims to enter upon the merit of that most happy and stupendous service; but it is impossible to describe with fidelity the period in question, without recording the truth of circumstances, and the just opinion and apprehensions of the time. I en-

* See the Convention of Copenhagen, 1800.

† Vide Memoirs of the Egyptian Expedition, by Sir Robert Wilson.

certain great respect for the noble Lord, who was the author of the expedition; but I hope he will allow me, without offence, to say, with good Captain Fluellen—"Upon my conscience, God Almighty did us some service."

In this complicated predicament of evil and despondency, with every part of Europe hostile to our interests, and preparing to annoy us; without a distinct end or remaining object in the war; our expeditions hopeless; our burthens pressing and severe; our enemy flushed with insolence and success, and galled by recent insult and repulse; our Sovereign indisposed and incapable of administering the affairs of his government; what hope or faint speculation of peace remained, what part of our affairs appeared retrievable? Do I overcharge or distort the picture? I appeal to the memory of all the country, who am myself a witness of its situation and its despair!

It was at such a moment, that his Majesty's late Ministers * thought proper to retire from his service; and that he was graciously pleased to call Mr. Addington to his councils. The melancholy event, and the period of doubt, difficulty, and danger, which intervened before

* Messrs. Pitt, Windham, and Dundas; the Lords Grenville, Spencer, and (after what his Court, I believe, calls, technically, an INTERLOCUTORY or *two*) the Lord Chancellor Rosslyn.

this and the other arrangements could be completed, are too painful, and too fresh in the memory for it to be necessary to relate. It was only upon his Majesty's most happy and providential recovery, that the nation could clearly know who were his servants.

It quickly appeared, however, that the best understanding prevailed between the seceders and their successors, who were indeed reproached with it as a weakness and a crime; but as the country dreaded nothing so much as falling under the conduct of Messrs. Fox, Grey, and the party of the Opposition, it derived consolation from the panegyric of the new Ministers pronounced by Mr. Pitt, in the House of Commons; and from the certainty of their being firmly supported by all the zeal, influence, and ability of their predecessors.

The public felt all the hazard and difficulty of their situation; and the courage and self-devotedness with which they had succeeded to the posts of danger, were the topics of admiration and applause. As yet no ambition had discovered itself bold enough to envy a situation which certainly was not a bed of roses and honours which promised to wither before their bloom. The very character which was drawn of Mr. Addington and his colleagues, by the masterly hand of Mr. Pitt, was in no instance so worthy of remark and approbation, as in the strong virtual

tual confession it involved, of the difficulties and dangers of the situation in which he had left the government; and the silent reproaches he was indirectly admitting in the case that he could be supposed to have been capable of retiring at such a moment, without a perfect confidence and satisfaction, that the King had been able to supply his place with a fit and sufficient government. Yet we shall soon find a very different picture, both of the Ministers and the state of the country, exhibited in the House of Commons, by the bosom friend of the right honourable gentleman.

If the private character of the new Government, and the great sacrifice of ease, security, and permanent dignity, which the principal person had not hesitated to make, exempted them from suspicion of vanity or ambition, in the assumption of stations of so much responsibility, yet as Ministers their ability was untried. The resignations had taken the nation by surprise, and a general sentiment of doubt and despondency prevailed. So long accustomed to look up to Mr. Pitt, they thought that Troy could be defended by no other arm. It was true, indeed, that his popularity had materially suffered by abandoning the reins of government in so questionable a manner at so terrible a crisis; but posterity will judge what must have been the attachment and affection of the country
for

for that Minister, what its opinion of his talents and his virtues (while they were entire,) since indignant as it was at his retreat, it still regarded his advice as the best hope of the state, and the new ministers as firm and secure behind the ruins of his reputation !

Quanta—Roma fuit ipsa ruina docet.

It could not however happen that this friendship and support should be entirely advantageous without any alloy or diminution. The party of the Old Opposition had taken occasion to treat the government with affected pity and contempt, as the mere creatures or substitutes of their predecessors; they pretended to consider the administration as in commission; and, as far as can be collected from their conduct, they had in truth so little opinion of its stability, as to resolve upon giving it a temporary support and assistance, rather than press it too fast, and before they were ready to profit of it, to its inevitable dissolution. Under these auspices did the King's servants return to Parliament from their elections. They had the confidence of their Sovereign—the extreme good will and approbation of the public, but depressed by considerable anxiety and doubts of their sufficiency—the support of the resigners—and their own weakness to defend them.

Of their own motive, conduct, and principle,

it is necessary to say a few, and but a very few, words. They had not coveted their employments, they had not intrigued for them, they had not obtained them by parliamentary or popular arts. Their sovereign, in a crisis of extreme exigency and danger, had claimed their services, and they knew their duty. But, in obeying the commands of their master, they had felt and were deeply penetrated with the impossibility of serving him and their country in the great necessity of the time, if that vast mass of talents, information, and influence, over which Mr. Pitt and Lord Grenville presided, were not only suddenly withdrawn from the support of his majesty's government, but converted into an opposing, or even a neutral force. Whatever may be the difficulty and the delicacy, (for they are extreme) of the point I am treating, I think it indispensable to speak with courage and with perspicuity; and I challenge the illustrious persons I have just named to controvert the fact or the spirit of a statement, which it is important to the present, and to future ages, to place beyond controversy and dispute. I must take upon me, therefore, to aver, that his Majesty's most gracious offer of his confidence to Mr. Addington, could not have been, and was not definitively accepted, until a solemn authentic pledge of honour had been given by the late Ministers, for their

“ CON-

"CONSTANT, ACTIVE, and ZEALOUS SUPPORT." I do assert that Mr. Pitt and Lord GRENVILLE* did sacredly and solemnly enter into *this exact engagement*, and in *this precise form of words*—You think with Hamlet, "the lady promises too much! Oh! but she'll keep her word!"

It must not be concealed, however, that even at this very moment of inauguration, the public might have discovered some germs and seeds of future difference and dissention. There was something in the very promise of support, and in the character of the parties, which, to a near observer, looked like an implied condition that this support should *never cease to be necessary*, and that ministers should never attempt to stand upon their own ground, and their own merits. Those at least, who could best decypher political characters, made use of this key; by which, reducing the mysterious contract into vulgar letters, they read plainly that the Ministers would be supported by their predecessors, *just as long* as they could be considered as weak, incapable, and deciduous—as long as they could be *hourly* displaced they would be *hourly* upheld and assisted; but if they should

* Lord Grenville has been reminded of this promise more than once by the Lords Pelham and Hobart—but his Lordship

leviter curare videtur

Quo promissa cadunt et somnia Pythagoræa.

attempt to walk without the leading string—if they should have the presumption to appear qualified for their offices, or to be successful in any of their measures—if they should dare to be firm, prudent, virtuous, or fortunate, or to lay any claim to any merit, or attempt by any means to procure the esteem or confidence of the country, then these acts should cancel the agreement, as contrary to its spirit and true meaning, and they should instantly be treated as rivals and enemies !

The House of Commons, I think, at this time, must be divided into four or five parties. The Ministers were as yet untried, and had taken their ground with singular modesty, appealing only to the future opinion of the public upon the measures they should pursue, and desiring to be judged of by their actions. The Old Opposition, though bent upon peace, or pacific demonstrations, was now evidently neither unanimous in principle, nor united in tactics. Messrs. Windham, Grenville, and their followers, were adverse to peace altogether—Mr. Pitt, himself an host, supported Ministers openly, and perhaps officiously—Mr. Pitt's friends, without the trouble of a public principle, or rule of conduct, were continually employed in decrying and discrediting the measures of Ministers, sneering at their persons, and foreboding their dismissal.

In this corner of the House, one continually
heard,

heard, in loud whispers, of their incapacity and *presumption* in having taken their situations, while, from another bench, they were openly branded as the mere puppets and substitutes of the persons to whom they had presumed to succeed.

It appeared as if the friends of the ex-ministry would have liked better to have left his Majesty altogether without a cabinet, and that for some reason or other, they would have preferred to see the kingdom ungoverned, and the King's sides naked in the anarchy. A painful obscurity hung over the motives of the resignations ; the causes assigned were so far from obtaining credit with the public, and were so inadequate to the effect, that a noble Lord, connected with both administrations, and whose principal characteristic and device are political prudence, had not scrupled to treat of them as " mysterious ;" and the temerity of vulgar irresponsible judgments, proceeding upon the hint, had unequivocally ascribed them to despondency and apprehension.

When they heard the friends of a ministry, whose retreat they attributed to despair, accuse the persons of *presumption*, who had the courage to assume the guidance of affairs in their place, the public inferred that it must be presumption and audacity to entertain the least hope of saving the country, for they did not believe
that

that things had of late been so wisely, or so prosperously conducted, as to render it presumptuous in any set of ministers to hope they should be able to conduct the business of government with equal prudence, economy, or success.

Had this sentiment been confined to these kingdoms, perhaps the ministers might have found no great difficulty in recovering the people from its effects. But unfortunately the same motives were attributed abroad to the conduct of their predecessors, whose retreat was considered, both by the government of France and the neutral powers of the Continent, as a virtual confession of the inability of the country to persist in the war, so that they had the misfortune to retire, and the new servants of the Crown to succeed under the imputation that the former possessed no ability of making peace, and the latter no means of continuing the war *. Under these fatal impressions of the public mind, both at home and abroad, was Lord Hawkesbury obliged to submit the first overtures for a treaty, which appeared to all men almost impossible to be obtained upon any terms short of ruin and disgrace; but to which we were at length happily conducted by the pacification of the neu-

* It was even believed that the late ministers had been long divided upon this point, an opinion which subsequent events appear to have justified.

tral powers in the Baltic, after the glorious battle off COPENHAGEN *, and by the *recovery* of the Treaty of *El-Arisch*, which was the consequence of a series of unhopèd-for victories in Egypt †.

It is not my intention to discuss the merits of the preliminary or definitive treaties ‡, nor do I otherwise allude to these or any other public transactions than as I find them connected with the conduct or character of parties. It is fresh in the recollection of the public, that upon the peace a difference of sentiment immediately appeared amongst the late ministers, so serious and important as not only to authorize and confirm the opinion which I have said had prevailed, of there having long existed a schism in their cabinet upon that question, but to make it appear for ever impossible for them to act together again in any political union whatsoever. No parties, no principles could be more distinct and discordant, than those of Mr. Pitt and Lord Grenville, with their several partizans of the old ministry. The first gave his entire approbation and support to the treaty, the latter omitted no species or excess of blame and condemnation. Indeed, in the course of the contention, a fact came out of so extraordi-

* April 2d. † Alexandria capitulated September 2d.

‡ March 25, 1801, and Oct. 1, 1801.

nary a nature, that although not strictly within the period to which I have confined this discourse, it appears to me too much connected with the object of it, and intrinsically of too much curiosity and interest, to be misplaced here, or any where.

I have already adverted to the disadvantage under which Ministers had been obliged to open the Treaty. The resignations were interpreted as signals of distress; and the unfortunate negotiations at LISLE, confined and circumscribed every project or overture they could hazard. Could Mr. Addington propose terms less favourable to Bonaparte, than Lord Grenville had offered to Barras and Reubell? Would France, now that one half of the Continent lay prostrate at her foot, by the Treaty of Luneville; mistress of Egypt; and stirring up a confederation of Kings from the bosom of the North, accept conditions less glorious or profitable, than we had offered her at the moment of one of her revolutions *, while the powers of Europe were unbroken, and ready to renew the war at our side? The projet of LISLE therefore was a circle, out of which the successors of Lord Grenville could not tread, and they could no otherwise hope to obtain even those terms in the present predicament of the

* September 4, 1797.

country, than as they had been demonstrably inferior and inadequate to its condition, at the time they were offered.

Notwithstanding that so early as the treaty concluded with the Court of St. Petersburg*, the great talents of Lord Grenville had been employed upon a speech and a pamphlet, in which he endeavoured to oppose, discredit, and stigmatize, with every species of acrimony and contempt, those Ministers to whom he had so lately engaged his *constant, zealous, and active support*, the public now beheld with something more than astonishment, the same powers of eloquence, the same industry, and the same spirit exerted to induce Parliament to pronounce a censure upon a treaty of peace, drawn up upon his own model, and almost copied from his own hand! During these discussions, Mr. Windham, who now took the lead in the opposition in the other House, made the important confession, that he had always disapproved of the project offered by his Lordship to the French Directory; and had always condemned these negotiations *in his mind*, to which, as a member of the Cabinet, he had outwardly lent his name, credit, and responsibility, and which he had constantly defended in Parliament. Neither did this confession appear officious but indispensable; for Mr. Windham felt the glaring

* June 5, 1801.

inconsistency of opposing the peace, and approving of the project. He knew that the basis of the Treaty of Amiens was traced at *Lisle*; he knew that it had been made more favourable for this country, under circumstances more unfavourable; he knew that his colleagues had not hoped to obtain the whole of their *projet*; and that in every negotiation something must be abandoned, and something conceded from the conditions of the overture. He knew that if it were contended, that he and his colleagues would not have departed from their *projet* in a single tittle, it followed that it had not been a project, but an ultimatum; and that a courier had been more properly charged with it, than a Minister Plenipotentiary. Before, therefore, he would venture to condemn Lord Cornwallis's Treaty, with just regard to his own character, he took care to disclaim and disavow his part in Lord Malmsbury's Negociation. Do I condemn the right honourable gentleman for this conduct? not certainly for leaving all the honour of the negotiations at Lisle to Lord Grenville; not certainly for protecting his own reputation, although in so doing he shewed little regard for that of his noble colleague, in the late Cabinet and present Opposition, whose inconsistency he was cruelly holding up to derision; but I confess, I am at a loss to conceive, what greater necessity existed now for his censuring
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the peace of Amiens, of which the guilt and reproach (if there were any) did not attach and were not imputed to him, than he could discover in 1797, when his just portion of the opprobrium of the negotiations at Lisle, was openly fixed upon his head. I have heard this gentleman applauded by his friends to the very echo, for his consistency and manliness of conduct. Doubtless, by the side of Lord Grenville, Mr. Windham has some advantage! but positive qualities are neither dependant upon comparisons nor contrasts, nor is a man therefore a dwarf because he happens to stand by a giant. As Mr. Windham is now at the head of a party, and of a great political principle, it may be fitting to enquire a little into the truth and warrant of a title so high and so rare!

Is it consistent (with what is it consistent) to oppose a measure in the Council, and approve it in the House of Commons? To appear for peace, and condemn it; to defend negotiations, and lament them; to think war only can save the country, and be part of a ministry eternally straining after treaties? Is it consistent to have been silent at Lisle, and vociferous at Amiens—to be neutral in power, and violent out of it—to conceal opinions as a Minister, and promulge them as the head of a party?—Are these, I ask, the qualities and distinctive marks of a man of place—a man of time—a man of circumstances—

ces—a man of convenience—or the masculine, firm, consistent, unalterable character of Mr. Windham?

In pursuing the subject of these remarks, we shall have the misfortune to see the right honourable gentleman in full fruition of his vow, and the kingdom replunged into a war, which no policy, no human prudence, no moderation, no forbearance, could advert. Shall we find him *consistent* then? Shall we hear his voice cheering the country, inspiring confidence in the government, heroic ardour and self-devotedness in the people? Shall we behold him arraying the forces, balloting the militia, calling out the volunteers? Will he impose silence upon the factions by his eloquence, banishing delays, and conquering obstacles by the vigour of his mind? Giving the lesson and example of public virtue, and acting the glorious part of a patriot-statesman, the disciple of Burke?

The Ministers were confident of having deserved well; they had obtained a peace for the country, beyond the hopes of the wisest and the most sanguine of their well-wishers, and they had arrived at it by the gate of victory and success. During the short period of their power, the battles of *Algeziras* and *Copenhagen* had crowned the rostral column, and completed the glorious blazon of our naval enterprise and success. But the recovery of the
treaty

treaty of *El-Arisch*, in consequence of the decided superiority of his Majesty's troops and commanders over the pretended invincible generals and armies of France, gave a character to the peace, more desirable, more incalculably valuable, than Malta, Trinidad, Ceylon, or all the territorial acquisitions which could have been obtained by the utmost happiness of diplomatic ingenuity *.

It has been already observed, that Mr. Fox, and the whole of the Old Opposition party, as it is henceforward to be called, thought it their policy to approve unequivocally of the peace. How could they do otherwise? They had uniformly invoked and demanded peace at every expense and at every sacrifice; and they had determined besides to give a little encouragement to the *substitute* administration, in the hope that it might open the way to a better understanding in certain cases, and at any rate for the satisfaction of mortifying the resigners, and rendering their promised, but always equi-

* I should, (with more leisure) have little hesitation in maintaining the paradox, that at Amiens it would have been possible to render back more to the First Consul and his allies, after our victories in Egypt than before them; because, from henceforward, our established superiority in the field, as well as upon the ocean, enabled us to risk more without palpable imprudence, to confide more in ourselves, and less in distant fortresses and external defence; and, finally, to try the "Grand Experiment of Peace," with better auspices, and more certain resources in ourselves.

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vocal assistance, less important and meritorious. I do not know that it is necessary to the present subject, for me to occupy much more of the time and reflexion of the public upon the state and politics of parties, at this period. It is possible some individuals * had deeper designs and clearer objects in view. But as brevity is a great part of my design, I think this short recapitulation will be sufficient.

Mr. Pitt unequivocally approved the peace—Mr. Windham, the Grenvilles, and their adherents, as decidedly affected to lament and condemn it—while the personal friends of Mr. Pitt, and the members most attached and devoted to him by the habits of private life, took the liberty of disclaiming him for their leader, and indulged in every species of rancour, malice, and hostility, against the person who had had the *presumption* to fill his vacant place in the Cabinet. Of this party, Mr. Canning, if not the founder, had the reputation of being the leader; and as I have now arrived at the dissolution of the last parlia-

* Mr. Tierney has succeeded. Reports have not been wanting, nor do I believe that Mr. Grey and Lord Moira would have proved inexorable *if any overtures had been made*; but, the fact is otherwise. It is to be observed that Mr. Grey, had taken many occasions of distinguishing his parliamentary opposition from that of Mr. Fox. With regard to Government, as connected with parties, the friendship of Mr. Pitt, and his return to the Cabinet, were its favourite, and (I imagine) its exclusive reliance and desire.

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ment *, I take the opportunity of submitting a few reflections upon the influence they had upon public opinion, the doubts, anxiety, and speculation which they nourished and kept alive, and the disagreeable insinuations and suspicions, they originated against the purity of the high character, whose wishes and interests they were supposed best to understand, and to whose person they were exclusively devoted.

It appeared from the eager resentments of these zealous partizans, in the first place, that they disapproved of the conduct of their patron, in having resigned the seals of his office;—and that with his place he had lost that influence and authority over their minds, which had hitherto commanded their approbation or acquiescence; that they chose now to think and speak for themselves, to condemn his arrangements, to ridicule his friendships, and to attack the measures, and the men he supported. Then again, as it is the nature of uncertainty, it seemed as if this support could not be perfectly sincere, or very durable, in

* The differences of opinion upon the peace-establishment arose so implicitly out of those upon the peace, that they neither filtered or discovered any thing, that I am aware of, in the state of parties. Mr. Fox and Mr. Bankes would have been contented with the usual degree of force and preparedness. Mr. Windham and the Grenvilles sounded alarm and armament. The Ministers, as usual, took the middle course.

which

which the persons most solicitous of his favour could not be induced to concur; and it was thought incredible that Mr. Canning, in particular, distinguished by his friendship and partiality, should rebel against his benefactor; and, at the moment of his retreat, fall suddenly into mutiny and revolt! The public could not, therefore, be brought implicitly to believe either that the acceptance of the new Ministers itself, or at any rate the credit and popularity which they had acquired by the late happy events, were altogether agreeable to Mr. Pitt.

It was observed, that at the very outset, his confidential friends, his Pylades and faithful Achates, had felt disappointment in the very circumstance of the King's having been able to find another Minister at all! But that this Minister should dare to appear worthy of his Majesty's confidence, and to carry on his affairs with ability or success, appeared an unpardonable injury and a crime!

If I were as certain of not giving offence, as I am free from intending it, and of being as little suspected of a flattery, as I am incapable of meaning one, I would venture to ask of Mr. Canning himself, for whose agreeable talents and private worth I have as much respect as any man, whether it were possible for these inferences and conclusions to have escaped his own good sense and sagacity?

Whether

Whether he did not feel that he was throwing a suspicion over the candour and sincerity of Mr. Pitt*? and in case that any possible measures of the present Ministers, at any future time, might *compel the conscience* of Mr. Pitt to withdraw his promised support from them, and to take an active part in opposition to them, whether he did not perceive that he was undermining and destroying beforehand the conviction and credit of the country, in the compulsion of his right honourable friend's conscience? Whether he did not perceive that he was exposing that late, contingent, constrained, and possible opposition to the suspicion of system, preconcert, and policy?

I would ask of Mr. CANNING whether it were not too great a submission of his rare talents and acquirements, to appear a mere partizan and stickler for the House of Grenville? Whether he can look back with satisfaction hereafter, from the proud eminence to which one day no doubt he aspires in the councils of his country, to the debate of Nov. 23, 1802, when, blinded by recent hatred and party zeal, he asserted, that the "*state in which the late ministers left the country, was the reverse of calamitous?*" "*That there never was a situation*

* Mr. Pitt has since been exculpated upon this point by Mr. Canning with great eloquence, but imperfect success. Vide Parl. Reg. Dec. 8, 1802.

which afforded more temptation to the wishes or ambition of those who were proposed to succeed them ;” that nothing could be more desirable than the succession obtained by the present Minister ;” &c. &c. Surely there may come a time*

Magno cum optaverit emptum,

that all these things had been unsaid, which were contradicted by the conscience of every hearer, and will be eternally disproved by the history of the country.

I would ask of Mr. Canning, (for whom I repeat that I entertain a considerable degree of respect and good-will), whether, in the difference and distinction with which he has always affected to treat his noble friend, Lord Hawkesbury, he was pleasing the old ministry? and whether his personalities towards Mr. Addington did not lead him in these civilities to mortify Lord Grenville? But if his regard for Lord Hawkesbury could conquer the fear of offending Lord Grenville, why might not his regard for Mr. Pitt have overcome his antipathy to Mr. Addington†? I would ask whether he could feel no repugnance at becoming the instrument, (I will not say the machine) of other persons? If the delicacy of his feelings were quite satisfied as to the justice, the honor, or the decency,

* Vide Parliamentary Register, Nov. 23.

† Vide Debates, December 2d.

of being the organ of *their* hatred, *their* fury, *their* pride, disappointment, and rancour, against gentlemen with whom he had long lived in habits of political and private intimacy, for whom he had professed friendship and esteem; against Mr. Addington, the bosom friend of his patron, and against Lord Chatham, his brother?

I would ask of Mr. Canning, whether he felt no scruple or compunction for himself, and if he had not discarded all respect and mercy for the feelings of Mr. Pitt, when he consented to become the chief of the satyrists and scoffers of a cabinet, of which Lord Chatham was the president? and I would ask him whether he had been juster to himself, and to his own just pretensions and character, than we have seen him to the sensibility of his friend and patron, when he condescended to become a hero of squibs and epigrams, a leader of doggrel and lampoon, a power in the war of abuse and invective, an instrument of Mr. Windham, and an auxiliary of Cobbett?

A great part of the summer of 1802, was taken up with the general election, in which the ministers had formed the singular resolution of using no influence, or interference whatsoever. In the mean time, the First Consul of France was pursuing a course that must have been exceedingly gratifying to Mr. Windham, and the

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band of gentleman, whom the *Moniteur* had politely christened the "war-faction." But upon these topics, I permit myself to say no more than I conceive to be necessary to keep up the thread of the particular subjects under discussion. When Parliament re-assembled*, the aspect of foreign affairs, was far from promising tranquillity. The government in the Tuilleries had proceeded with violence, and without an attempt at dissimulation in that train of encroachment, from which, even during the negotiation at Amiens, it had not been able to desist. I need scarcely mention the names of Piedmont, Parma, and Switzerland. The French troops had not been withdrawn according to treaty from the territories of the Batavian Republic, and some of the cessions on our part in the Treaty of Amiens remained unexecuted.

It had also become necessary for ministers to place in the King's mouth, an assurance that his Majesty would continue to keep a vigilant eye upon the affairs of the Continent†.—There was

* November 8, 1802.

† "In my intercourse with foreign powers, I have been actuated by a sincere desire for the maintenance of peace. It is nevertheless impossible for me to lose sight of that established and wise system of policy, by which the interests of other states are connected with our own; and I cannot therefore be indifferent to any material change in their relative condition and

was, I believe, but one opinion upon this point, that it was a dignified and becoming proceeding; at least it did not appear expedient to any of the parties I have described to find fault with it. It was considered as a solemn but a temperate protest against the offensive and insulting assumption of the Official Paper of the chief magistrate of France, who was evidently attempting to discredit and dishonour us in the courts of Europe, trying the spirit of the country, and the extent of the patience and forbearance of its government, by avowed and authenticated pretensions: asserting, that at the late peace we had consented to withdraw ourselves from all continental interference and connexion, and to confine and circumscribe our political cares and importance to our own island and its dependencies. It may be asked why I have thought it necessary to state this circumstance so particularly, seeing that no division or new discovery of parties was the result of it? My excuse will be, that this paragraph of his Majesty's Speech is a complete answer to all those paltry and futile accusations which have been preferred against ministers, for having concealed the true state of affairs, during

and strength. My conduct will invariably be regulated by a due consideration of the actual situation of Europe, and by a watchful solicitude for the permanent welfare of my people."

His Majesty's Speech, Nov. 3, 1802.

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the discussion of the bill for the relief of the Prince of Wales; upon which occasion they are accused of having given a false representation of the probabilities of the permanence of the Peace.—The interval between this message and the 8th of March, is but *three* weeks! the whole complaint and charge are confined to three weeks! But surely government did not encourage too sanguine a hope of the duration of peace, when they described it to be “an experiment”—when they said it had “left the Continent in an unsatisfactory state”—when they asked for “fifty thousand seamen for the defence and security of our own coasts.”—Really if there exists an individual who ever did confide in the *duration* of the late peace, I would counsel him to keep his own secret. It will be in vain to charge his drivelling as a crime upon other men. He is *Nature's* fool, and not Mr. Addington's.

At the opening of the new Parliament, it quickly appeared that the reflexions of the recess, and the philosophy of the summer had diminished nothing of those violent passions which had disturbed the features of the resignation, and made the voluntary act of the late ministers ~~look~~ like constraint and disappointment. Their desire to return into the offices they had quitted, as it now appeared, under some error or misconception, was no longer dissembled, and the
houses

houses of parliament seemed to have changed their constitutional character and office for comitia and hustings, where our Peers and representatives, regardless of the King's prerogative, were occupied in daily canvass for the seats in his cabinet. The Lords Grenville*, Spencer, and Carlisle, without the smallest colour or care of dissimulation, held a language which openly pointed out to the executive government to take back the minister who had resigned in 1801. This was the design of every motion, the burthen of every amendment, the conclusion of every harangue. For this object, every species of despondency was again carefully spread amongst the people. The finances were decried, and the statements of the Chancellor of the Exchequer disputed—even the resources of the country were attacked. For this the conduct of government was arraigned in all its foreign intercourse, and the crimes of Bonaparte preposterously transferred to Mr. Addington. For this, the Admiralty was reviled and calumniated, and those just and salutary reforms in the dock-yards, which will carry down the victorious name of St. Vincent to posterity, with *every* character of public virtue and devotion, represented as cruel persecutions. For this, the “insurrection of jobbers” in the dock-yards was abetted and defended, and the rebellion of

* Debates, Dec. 2.

boards and departments encouraged and promoted.

It has been said, that

Le jour d'un nouveau regne est le jour des ingrats :

but it does not appear that the late ministers had any complaints of this nature to prefer. It is true that the mass of political gratitude, which is apt enough to become inert and dull, was here set to work by a proper infusion of hope and speculation, and that the return of the old ministry, which was still as confidently looked for as it was strenuously attempted, might have no little share in reminding so many honourable members and *commissioners* of their original obligations. Perhaps in only one point of view was the position of the Ministry more difficult than it was rendered by this *speculative gratitude*, and that was by their own real regard and adherence for some of their predecessors. This sentiment they had allowed to cripple their defence in the debate upon the peace of Amiens, and to preclude them from going into the state of the nation, and recording the unhappy circumstances of the country, at the time that the care of its affairs devolved upon them ; and this sentiment always led them to hope and desire the return of Mr. Pitt into the Cabinet, and that he would one day form a part of their administration. It is not, indeed, to be wondered at that

that this attachment and affection, the habit of all his life, should still prevail in the bosom of Mr. Addington, and it could only be lamented if it were not returned with the same warmth of sincerity, and the same constancy of friendship.

The first part of the Session shews us Mr. Pitt courted by both parties, the object of their common worship and desire, severally invited by each to strengthen or overthrow the Ministry which he had himself installed by the strongest eulogium, whose measures he had individually supported, and who had committed the single crime of appearing to justify and deserve the characters he had given of them.

It were curious to consider what inducements could have been suggested by the eloquence and ingenuity of Lord Grenville, to prevail upon his right honourable relation to abandon them ! It cannot be supposed that he urged to Mr. Pitt the care of consistency and regard to his own reputation ! That he argued that it was incumbent upon him, or becoming, to desert the ministry, *because* he had promised to support them, or *because* he had applauded the measures and the principle of their administration. One cannot bring oneself to imagine, that the noble Lord represented to him that he ought to join Mr. Windham and his lordship, *because* they were bent upon immediate war, while Mr.

Pitt

Pitt himself was decided to prolong peace to the last moment of endurance. It is more natural to enquire what arguments his great abilities could invent to gain over his right honourable cousin, *in spite* of those circumstances ; by what address he could keep them out of his eye ; by what consummate policy and skill he could lead his mind away from them, while he presented those inducements (whatever they were) private or public, of ambition or consanguinity, by which he was at last crowned with success in this extraordinary negotiation. I confess, that if any single thing could make me regret, at this juncture, the absence of his Lordship from his Majesty's councils, it would be the conviction which this circumstance presents of the unparalleled skill and ability, and of the absolutely unrivalled powers of his mind in this science of negotiation. I have not forgotten his Lordship's letter to the First Consul of France ; but the diplomatist who could persuade Mr. Pitt upon this occasion, appears to me the sole Minister capable of converting Bonaparte !

In the mean time, notwithstanding the open recommendations, or rather dictates for his return to the treasury, which were unremitted in either house of parliament, that right honourable gentleman, whose health and avocations did not permit his attendance in parliament, continued his assurances of support to the ministers :

nisters: but it caused some degree of surprise that no authority was given in either house of parliament to any gentleman in his confidence to disclaim and deny all part and knowledge in the unconstitutional mention that had been made of his name. It does rather appear as if there had been a little political jilting and flirtation with both suitors; and one cannot help thinking one might have seen

illum tereti cervice reflexum
 Mulcere alternos, et corpora fingere lingua.

So far, however, as I have had opportunity to *observe*, I think I may venture to assert, that the Ministers maintained their usual good correspondence, and received the usual confirmations of support and friendship from Mr. Pitt till March last, and some time rather advanced in that month. Upon her Majesty's birthday, in January, I have heard that some trifling form and solemnity confirmed the bond, and that Mr. Pitt, who dined with the Chancellor of the Exchequer, took occasion to declare that he would come to town and give government his assistance in parliament upon the first question of importance, and upon any which they might think required his support; but having been at a distance at that time, and unwilling now to make *particular* enquiries, I state it only
 as

as *report*. By stating this *report*, I do not mean to discredit it: upon the contrary, my *observation* at another *time* and *place*, leads me to vouch for its extreme probability. If, after all, there be *any* error, it is in the date not the truth of the transaction. The friendship, however, continued till the period I have assigned. Nor can I state it as having been *absolutely* retracted or dissolved till about the third week in April, although there remained, in the interval, no appearances of its effect or existence. Very early in this month, it is well known, that a plan was in agitation for the admission of that right honourable gentlemen, and some of his friends, into the Cabinet. *As far as I have observed*, this negotiation originated with Lord Melville, and was conducted by him; nor do I at all fear being mistaken in stating, that the intentions and conduct of that noble Lord were fair, honourable, and impartial. I have great satisfaction in saying so, because I know a contrary opinion prevails, and because a subsequent vote of his lordship's has a tendency to maintain and encourage that opinion. Those persons, however, who had the means of near observation, believed that the noble lord was almost as much hurt and disappointed at the extravagant proposition upon which the negotiation went off, as the Ministers themselves were.

The

The war was now evidently approaching * ; and, besides those personal habits of friendship, which at all times governed the mind of Mr. Addington, the great talents and popularity of Mr. Pitt, amongst the monied persons, must have rendered him a most desirable acquisition to any administration in which he would take a part.—I tread here, and I am very sensible of it, upon tender ground; I feel that I may be uttering things better liked in silence, but not better suppressed; for the public and posterity are interested in the truth, and have a right to it. That I shall not much, or materially mislead them, I have no light reason to be satisfied; but neither do I pretend to have observed *every thing*, nor think it quite prudent to set down every thing I may have observed. If I fall into any mistake, or misstate the smallest point of importance to the character of any of the distinguished persons involved in the subject of these Remarks, the error is involuntary: and it is evident that it is so, since there is so much case and so great an interest in refuting it. It might, perhaps, be thought too much to appeal to Lord Melville for the accuracy of *anonymous* allegations; but the public will judge whether, if I am capable of deceiving it, Mr. Pitt and

* The King's message had been delivered on the 8th of March, and the negotiations for peace were at this period very unpromising.

other gentlemen are likely to submit to the following *mis*-representations !

In the negotiation which his Lordship conducted, I think it proper that it should be known, that there was no obstacle upon the part of ministry to his Lordship's return, with Mr. Pitt and others of his friends ; I do not say upon a footing of equality with Mr. Addington and others of the present administration, but *beyond it*. It is proper that it should be known, that the treaty did not go off (as has been pretended) on account of the want of a message *from a quarter, too high to be mentioned*, a communication which would not have been wanting in due time, if the negotiation could have been brought to an issue upon the terms I have mentioned ; but that it broke off upon the positive unalterable demand of Mr. Pitt himself, to brink back with him the Lords Grenville and Spencer, with other noble and honourable persons, who had disapproved of *every* measure of the government, who were in the habit of *personal* incivility and disrespect, and who were adverse to the whole spirit and principle of the administration.

We have now seen that those recommendations, or rather dictates to the Sovereign, with which the Sessions opened, those loud demands for the return of Mr. Pitt to the confidence of his Majesty, have been faithfully and honourably repaid.

Lord

Lord Grenville *would* replace Mr. Pitt in power, and it had been very ungrateful if Mr. Pitt had forgotten the obligation. Thus have these illustrious persons maintained, unbroken, the bands of their political connexion, in spite of their difference of opinion upon the greatest political occurrences—and thus has Mr. Addington been deprived of Mr. Pitt's friendship, notwithstanding every one of his measures has received his support and approbation !

The discussion of this extraordinary transaction, has led me somewhat past the period of his Majesty's message of the 8th of March, in which the necessity had been announced of adopting measures of precaution, with regard to France ; which proceeding of the ministry, and the subsequent armament they proposed, so far from producing that unanimity of parties which might have been expected, and which at first it appeared to have effected, only exasperated and laid bare the depth and foulness of their rank and mortified ambition. Will it be believed, that upon this occasion the "war-faction*," (to use the phrase of the First Consul of France) which had treated every moment of peace as a compromise of the national honour and security, which had incessantly urged, railed, and attempted to

* They were styled "Bloodhounds" in a print which is in the exclusive interest of Mr. Pitt.

intimidate

intimidate the government into immediate war, now turned, suddenly as the wind, and shifted. their principles like a sail? Let us hear the language of the manly, consistent Mr. Windham*! "He hoped that it would not be supposed that the opposers of the peace would be foremost to propose the renewal of hostilities! the *very reverse* would be found to be the legitimate result of the principles they had embraced: they had chiefly opposed that peace because its terms put the country out of a condition to go to war again!!! There were no persons holding his opinions who could contemplate the renewal of war without serious alarm†!!!

Mr. Canning said, "The message had excited throughout the country the greatest *anxiety* and *alarm*," and complained of the "great degree of docility which the people had *of late* manifested, and of their strong disposition to give Ministers credit, &c.‡"

Mr. Thomas Grenville declared that there was no man more ready or more eager to vote

* In the Debate on the Address, November 23, Mr. Windham said, "Not being in an official situation, I am not sufficiently informed to advise particularly—but I think we should weigh well in what situation we shall be when the war comes upon us, for come it will, and sooner than I wish to say. I THINK IT WOULD BE THE WISER WAY TO ANTICIPATE THE BLOW."

† March 9. Vide Parliamentary Register. Debate upon the Address.

‡ Ibid.

for

for the address, especially if it should be likely to procure PEACE and TRANQUILLITY *!!!

Dr. Lawrence professed, "his wishes were for PEACE!!! He expected it should be proved that the war, if it *must* now be renewed, was indispensably necessary to the safety and honor of the empire †!!!"

I will not disgust the reader with more of this opprobrious palinody, nor detain him long from the reflexions it must excite. But it is necessary that I should fix his attention upon these miraculous conversions, because he will shortly find that they were so sincere and compunctious, and the new reluctance and aversion to hostilities so pious and invincible, as to induce the sect to throw every obstacle in the way of officering the militia, to discredit our constitutional army altogether, and with the zeal of true proselytism to preach up humiliation and despondency, and decry that wicked confidence in our own state, and means of salvation, which political methodists know to be the most infallible sign of reprobation.

It is too recent in recollection for it to be necessary for me to relate with what sentiments the public received this new creed of the most serene and pacific war-faction; and it might be

* March 9. Vide Parliamentary Register. Debate upon the Address.

† Ibid.

thought ludicrous and out of the scope of the present topic, to advert to the surprise and astonishment which General Bonaparte is said to have manifested upon discovering the long mistake and mis-apprehension under which he had lived with regard to it.

I cannot, however, pass over this point altogether, because I am of opinion that the language now held by the new opposition had a considerable effect upon the negotiations which were carried on from this period, with increased activity and interest, and assumed a tone exceedingly categorical and decisive. Doubtless, it is impossible for me, or any other individual, to prove that the First Consul had not originally fixed his resolution, and that he had not been always altogether determined upon war. In this case it must be admitted, that he derived not his first motive from the extraordinary language of Mr. Windham and his colleagues. But I shall then contend, that this language must have operated to encourage and confirm his intention, which neither Mr. Windham, nor any other person can deny, might possibly have wavered, or have finally given way. The First Consul, in his memorable *exposé* to the legislative body, had expressly stated, that "this country could find no ally upon the Continent, and that without allies, and single-handed, she was unable to sustain a war with France." I believe

believe this defiance was received with indignation by every Englishman, and by Mr. Windham among the rest; I had once thought, even more than by the rest. I believe too, that it was resented not more for its audacity, than its absolute falsehood, and that there did not exist at that time a single individual who was not prepared to contradict and disprove it. How then must it have satisfied and delighted the first Consul to learn, that as soon as the King's message had taught us to think in earnest upon the subject, and as soon as a distinct appearance and approach of war had become visible in England, even those statesmen who had most invoked and provoked it, were become sudden converts to his opinion, and openly declared the truth of it! With what transports must he not have heard M. Otto translate from the debates in the English papers this express statement of Mr. Windham, that "he could not contemplate the renewal of hostilities without serious alarm, and that he had chiefly opposed the peace *because it had put the country out of a condition to renew the war?*"

One cannot help figuring to oneself the amazement of this august Personage at finding that he had been speaking truth as Moliere's Citizen spoke prose, *without suspecting it*; and one fancies all those little tender conscientious reproaches which he must have made

made to his own mind for the injustice he had been guilty of, and the ill-opinion he had entertained of the candid, manly, and consistent Mr. Windham ! Certainly had he sooner been made acquainted with the Right Honourable Gentleman's sentiments upon the peace, and upon the impossibility of this country's going to war again, there had been no occasion for accusing him of complicity with the contrivers of the infernal machine ! Could he have foreknown the Right Honourable Gentleman's thoughts of the Militia, and the Army of Reserve, and the training of the country, he would not have been ungrateful enough to consider him as the chief of an atrocious "war-faction," an implacable enemy of France, and a conspirator against the life of her first magistrate !

The anxious period which intervened between his Majesty's message of the 8th of March, and the return of his Ambassador from Paris, does not appear to me to furnish any thing connected with the state of parties, more interesting than the avowal of these sentiments by Mr. Windham and Mr. W. Elliot, who had been Secretaries at War under the late administration. Both these gentlemen were now discovered to be adverse to the system and principle of militia forces altogether ; an opinion which did not so much surprise the admirers of the constitution and of that constitutional force, upon any other ground,

ground, as because in their official situations, they had severally appeared the most zealous advocates and promoters of this species of army. Mr. Elliot, who now opposed recruiting the Irish militia at four guineas per man, was reminded by the Attorney General for Ireland, that he himself (Mr. Elliot) had brought in a bill * for recruiting it at six guineas; and Mr. Windham † was put in mind that during the time he had been in office, the militia in England had been augmented to an unprecedented degree, and the militia of both Scotland and Ireland *instituted* and begun!! Thus it appeared, that it was not in the solitary instance of the negotiations at Lisle, but in great general measures of domestic import, executive government, and legislation, that the manly, consistent Mr. Windham, had not only lent his name, countenance, and authority, against his opinion, but that he had even condescended to become the official instrument and organ of measures which he disapproved and condemned!! It always remained however to be accounted for, both by this Right Honourable Gentleman and Mr. Elliot, why they felt themselves more obliged to declare their opposition at one time than at another; why they could submit their docile conscience to the hand of Mr. Pitt, and shew such a restive spirit of mutiny under the

* March 15.

† March 16.

guidance of his successor!!! It will be said they were in office at one time, and out of it at the other ; but if this is an excuse, "it follows that to be neutral in things you disapprove, is less blameable than to be active in them ; and that you may originate measures you condemn, but not suffer them to be promoted by other persons.

While the artifices, and possibly the hesitation of the mind of the First Consul of France protracted the negotiations, the New Opposition did not fail to urge and goad ministers to a premature disclosure of the intercourse which was taking place between the two governments ; a circumstance which it is necessary to take notice of in this place, because it produced Lord Grenville in circumstances similar to Mr. Windham, and proved that no part of the New Opposition would submit in any shape to be hampered and restrained by the parts they had acted in the late government, or by a weak and scrupulous regard to past habits, professions, and character, any more than by their specific engagements, and promises of support.

Certainly after the manners and tone which the noble Lord had held in office, it was the boldest of all attempts to appear in the part of the chief of an opposition ; and his great abilities, and the respect which is due to them, are in nothing more evident than that he is able to sustain

sustain it at all : there are so many subjects upon which an ordinary mind would have been precluded from taking part ! To common men, it would have appeared almost impossible to move eternally for papers—to require messages and communications from the crown—to complain of the people being kept in the dark—of ministers shrinking from responsibility—to stop a malt bill—to dispute the prosperity of the revenue—to censure a treaty of their own drawing up—in short, to demand whatever they had refused—to condemn whatever conduct they had pursued—to attack where they had promised to support—and to be in complete uniform variance and hostility with the whole tenour of their life, character, and principles.

It would not be doing even the little justice I am able, to the subject I am treating of, if I were to omit, that the style and language of opposition was much degenerated in the new hands to which it had transferred itself. The late minority, though it had been treated as a low contemptible faction of levellers and jacobins, never dealt in abuse and incivility so largely as the great aristocracy which had now succeeded to their place. *Absurd, incapable*, and grosser epithets were liberally applied to his Majesty's councils and ministers, and by no members of either house more frequently than by the noble Lord, who, while a minister, was not very tolerant

rant in debate, not very apt to forgive even a question or an allusion ! It has been said, that

Honores mutant mores,

but the converse of the proposition was now established to be true. I will not say of the noble Lord, that none but himself could be his parallel, but that none but himself could be so perfectly and entirely the opposite and converse of himself. It is an old axiom that things alike cannot be the same ; but that identity cannot be destroyed by the most perfect antithesis and distinct dissimilarity, we have Lord Grenville for a demonstration !

In order the better to prick and goad the ministers to a discovery of the state of the negotiations, and to shake the public confidence in their talents and permanence in office, notice was now given of a motion of enquiry and censure by Mr. Patten, *organe*, upon this occasion, of Mr. Windham, and the ex-war party. Whether by the force employed, it was intended to give a mortifying estimate of the supposed strength and ability of ministers to resist, or whether the public were guilty of injustice towards the abilities and consequence of the honourable gentleman, I am not disposed to enquire. The motion was often put off, and it was not without some astonishment that the House found it seriously

ously brought on for discussion, after the return of the King's Ambassador, and the publication of his Majesty's declaration, together with the papers presented by his command to both Houses of Parliament, upon the 18th of May. Those, however, who had near opportunities of observing, waited for this motion with an impatience of curiosity not greater than it deserved, as it was destined to clear up the long mystery of Mr. Pitt's absence from his parliamentary duty, to make known his opinion of the state of public affairs, and to declare what effect his late unsuccessful negotiation had operated upon his public feelings, principles, and engagements.

Upon the question of the Address* to his Majesty, Mr. Pitt had made his first appearance in the House of Commons during the present parliament. But owing to a circumstance† of no very great importance, and foreign to the object of these remarks, the public were but very imperfectly in possession of the sentiments he had delivered, and of the sense in which they were to be received, as connected with parties and political obligations. In the speech which preceded the vote which the right honourable gentleman gave *for* the Address, a near observer could not mistake or overlook a very marked coldness, and studied personal indifference towards the ministers, and the first minister in

* May 23d.

† Exclusion of the Reporters.
particular.

particular. Not one expression of regard, not even the form and habit of his *right honourable friend*, escaped the reserved and cautious lips of the most **CONSTANT, ACTIVE, and ZEALOUS** supporter of Mr. Addington ! According to the new religion of the party which Mr. Pitt had lately insisted upon bringing back with him into the King's councils, his conscience enabled him to support the measures without commending the men.—Content, however, for the moment, with the effect of his cold, repulsive neutrality ; having alarmed one part of his hearers, afflicted another, and perplexed all ; the house saw him pleased to divide *with* the right honourable gentleman, whose credit and influence, not indeed every word that he had uttered, but every tone and gesture he had used, had been calculated to discourage and discredit !

The Address thus actively, constantly, and zealously supported, was carried in the House of Commons by a majority of 331, against an amendment proposed by Mr. Grey *.

Upon this occasion it is necessary to observe that Mr. Fox delivered a speech of the utmost eloquence, but stigmatized both by ministers and by the New Opposition as singularly danger-

* For the Address,	-	-	-	398
Against it,	-	-	-	67
				<hr/>
				331

ous, and calculated only to unnerve and relax the spirit and efforts of the country. The purport of the amendment*, and of the motive assigned by its supporters was, that the government had not been sincere in its endeavours to continue the peace. That government which had been uniformly reproached by the New Opposition with having acted tamely, submissively, and I know not what, in the vain and sanguine hope of prolonging the peace, was now taxed by the Old Opposition with never having wished to maintain it at all, and with having taken the first, and that a needless opportunity of breaking it!! Upon one side of the speaker's chair, the ministers heard themselves accused of having caused the war by their temporizing and spiritless policy; upon the other, by their violence and insincerity. Here, they ought to have declared war for the first aggression; there, not even for the last.

It is evident that these attacks must have frustrated and disarmed each other, and that no defence could be necessary for a system of conduct which was arraigned upon such opposite and hostile grounds. The ministry had now the satisfaction to find themselves fully possessed of the public confidence and opinion,

* In the House of Lords the minority divided only ten upon a similar amendment, moved by Lord King.

which

which always lies between the extremes of contending parties. The war itself was an irresistible proof that they would not compromise with the honour or essential interests of the empire, and the papers which were before the House and the public, evinced, not only the sincerest disposition to avoid a rupture, but a degree of forbearance and moderation, which being accompanied by great firmness and resolution, most wonderfully coincided with the sentiments and the characteristic temper of the people.

Both Oppositions were now reduced to a very singular and embarrassing dilemma, for with the weakness and dependence of ministers had perished all the motive of the old and all the obligation of the new to support them*. To attack them however was difficult, not merely because it was flying in the face of public opinion very strongly pronounced, but because they were, in point of fact, forced to combat each other, while the ministers remained invulnerable in the middle. Upon the other hand, the still-growing popularity of the ministers was a common grievance, and they were urged by reciprocal interests, to make, before it should be too late, some effort to shake or to stop it. We shall now see the effect of these councils upon Mr. Patten's motion, which (as it often

* Vide p. 17.

pleases fortune to bring forth the greatest effects from the most trifling causes) was destined to lay bare the secret mind of Mr. Pitt, to justify the sagacity of Mr. Canning, and to be the last grand comment upon ambitious friendships and political consciences.

It will not be expected of me to say more of a motion so recent*, and so strongly engraven upon the public mind, than that Mr. Pitt, not being able in his *conscience* to exculpate the ministers of the crimes they were charged with, gave his vote for deferring their arraignment. He proposed that the accusation, and the censure and punishment which were to follow it, should be left hanging from day to day over their heads, to be renewed and enforced the first time it should please Mr. Patten to pray the judgment of the house upon these unacquitted, uncondemned, but respited delinquents, to whom his Majesty had confided his government, and to whose guidance the nation looked up for the sole chance of escaping from the dreadful predicament into which it had relapsed by the perfidy and ambition of the French government. It is painful for me to record that fifty-five members of the House of Commons were found

* Mr. Patten's motion concluded with asserting, "that by their conduct the King's ministers had proved themselves to be unworthy of the confidence of the House, and unfit to conduct the affairs of the nation,"—June 3d.

of the same sentiments as Mr. Pitt, and that Mr. Canning* still dissented from him as thinking his vote too lenient and favourable to Mr. Addington and his colleagues.

It is here the place for me to submit a few reflexions, if without any impeachment of the reverence I bear for the talents of Mr. Pitt and the virtues of Mr. Canning, they may be permitted me. They shall at any rate be short and immediately relevant to the subject. Certainly I am not the only person (who has had opportunities of observing,) that has asked himself what greater degree of hostility, what species of more aggressive and unrelenting opposition, Mr. Pitt and Lord Grenville (for they are not to be separated since the failure of their negotiation in April,) could have exercised, if ministers, instead of being the objects of their primary panegyric and recommendation, instead of having their pledge of support, instead of having acted with vigour and with temper, and instead of being crowned with success in the great part of their measures, and with applause, even where the crimes of the French government had disap-

* Mr. Canning declared that he should give his vote freely and *conscientiously* for the censure.

Mr Pitt found himself in the minority, the votes being,

For his motion - - - - - 56

Against it - - - - - 333

pointed their endeavours; I say, in the case that Mr. Addington had been the greatest enemy Mr. Pitt had ever known, if he had proved the weakest, most incapable, unfortunate, and wicked Minister that had ever existed, what possible asperity, malevolence, and rancour of attack, could he have experienced which he did not now sustain from the party of his predecessors, who were pledged to give him their zealous, constant, and active support? Not that I suspect or impugn the motives of Mr. Pitt: it is evident they were imperious, compulsory, and irresistible.

Who that sees Lord Chatham in the cabinet, which Mr. Patten would impeach, but must admire the stern Roman virtue of Mr. Pitt, which could not bend to give a vote of acquittal even to a brother? The country may well congratulate itself upon possessing so rigid a patriot in these pliant times, when so many public duties are daily sacrificed to ambition and connexion.

I know, indeed, that to Mr. Canning, Mr. Pitt has not appeared to have acted with sufficient energy and character in this memorable vote. He expected, from the inflexible fortitude of his right honourable friend, that he would have declared for the impeachment of his brother and his friend.—But such severity was, even by the Romans themselves, thought above proof, and
extreme;

extreme ; and they gave the distinct appellation of Manlian virtues, Manlian commands, and Manlian duties, to all those great acts of self-devotedness which were exerted at the expense of the ties of blood, and the tender relations of private life. Mr. Canning's indignation has carried him so far, that he has scarcely since made his appearance in the House ; but I hope he will forgive the *weakness* of his right honourable friend, and return—His infirmity is human.

Frater est, Pamphile, difficile est ;

Mr. Addington, too, was the friend of his whole life, from early infancy to the hour at least in which he became his successor, if not to that in which the negotiation broke off !

The history of parties has now been brought down to a period, since which I confess, that I look upon the attachment and deference of the Chancellor of the Exchequer for Mr. Pitt as a weakness, the only one I have discovered in his character, and which, as a near observer I know I do not mistake, in attributing to the most amiable and purest source. Still it must be permitted me to doubt, whether, after all that has passed, it be not a very great discouragement to the real friends of government and of the country, to think they see too much respect and deference for an opinion, which they do not consider to be altogether
free

free from party, and even hostile views? Nothing can do Mr. Addington more honour, than the readiness I will not call it, but the eagerness he has always discovered to replace Mr. Pitt in the confidence of his Sovereign. I am convinced, that whoever has had an opportunity of observing, will believe, that even at this moment he is as strongly inclined to comply with every just and honourable wish of Mr. Pitt, as he was found to be in the late negotiation. Nor do I blame this disinterested disposition. Much, however, as I respect the motive of this conduct, it appears impossible to approve its tendency and effect. First of all, because, as long as Mr. Pitt makes it a *sine quâ non*, to bring back Lord Grenville with him into the cabinet, I have observed, that every negotiation will fail. There is an obstacle, if appearances are not very deceitful, even *higher* than Mr. Addington's reluctance, who is compelled by honour not to admit into the council with him, a man who has uniformly and undistinguishingly condemned and opposed every measure of his administration, not, without personal incivility and marked disrespect.

Secondly, because the parliamentary conduct of Mr. Pitt, (notwithstanding some vacillation since the ill-success of his *previous question*) appears decidedly hostile, and calculated in a

particular manner to embarrass the administration of the finances *. I need scarcely point out the debates † upon this subject, in which that right honourable gentleman has taken a part, nor the effect of his interference, which has been to cut off about a million and a quarter from the resources of the year; and to raise a cry that the faith of government was violated by including the Stockholder in the Income Tax, with every other species of proprietor. Although it is not altogether within the scope of this discourse to discuss public measures, yet it is often impossible to explain the state of parties, without some examination of the questions which discover their character and motives. And I am compelled, as a near observer, to remark upon this occasion, that the arguments of Mr. Pitt did not appear to have so much weight, as his authority, in obtaining exemp-

* So early as the 25th of February, Lord Grenville had disputed Lord Auckland's statement of the finances, asserting, that instead of a surplus of nine millions in the revenue, there was a deficit of four. On the 26th of July, however, the whole of the six millions and a half surplus of the consolidated fund were voted for the supplies of the year, upon the motion of Mr. Addington, *in the presence of* Mr. Pitt, who *made no objection* to the statement of the Chancellor of the Exchequer; nor has any motion been made by Mr. Gregor, who had given notice.—If these gentlemen are acting properly at *present*, as I do not deny, how will they justify their previous conduct?

† July 9th, 13th, 15th.

tions

tions for the indolent capital of the Stock-holder, while every other species of annual Income is liable to the just exigency of the State. I do therefore think the deference of government for Mr. Pitt has been prejudicial to the country in this instance* in particular; and it appears to me, that the inconvenience will be shortly acknowledged when they shall have to replace the contribution of the Stock-holder by new taxes upon the generality of other property and consumption. Mr. Pitt's complicated proposition† for taking the aggregate of rent, tithes, and poor-rates, as the basis of the Income-tax, if it was friendly in intention, had the misfortune to be delivered in tones of hostility and defiance, and it must be submitted, whether it be not very discouraging to the real friends of ministers, to hear them told without reserve by *any* member of the House, that, "if they are hostile to *his* plans, they set themselves against the best mode of raising the

* No person can be plainly absurd enough to contend, that an hundred pounds in a man's pocket is not equally contributable, whether he has received them from his Steward or his Stock-broker. The only question therefore is, whether it be a breach of faith to take the tax without expense and inconvenience at the Bank, instead of running after the public creditor when he has carried his dividend to his closet. This cry, however, of Mr. Pitt's, has cost us one million and a quarter from the annual resources of the war.

Et dubitamus adhuc virtutem extendere factis ?

† Debate, July 15th.

supplies,

supplies, &c." Not that any body has a greater respect for *his* plans (in the department of revenue) than myself; but that I cannot conceive why the House or the Ministers are to entertain the species of deference exacted from them for *his* plans, without *his* responsibility; or in what constitutional point of view it can be pretended, that the members who have lately seen more than a million per annum surrendered in conformity to *his* plans, are blindly to consider every man as hostile to the revenue, who will not vote for *his* plans, in opposition to the propositions of the executive government.

Nothing, I confess, would give me more satisfaction, in this extreme difficulty, and most arduous crisis of our state, than to hear Mr. Pitt firmly and zealously giving his support to the King's servants. His financial skill, his commanding eloquence, and his still great influence in the country, would be a tower of strength to his Majesty's government. The public would be well satisfied, I have no reason to doubt, if the right honourable gentleman would accept a seat in the Cabinet; but it will not endure, I believe, that the prerogative should be broken down, or his Majesty's free choice and judgment interfered with, by any species of dictation or preliminary condition. It is evident, from experience, that Mr. Pitt cannot force the Grenvilles back into power with

with him. The question therefore is, whether any private obligations or engagements to that party ought to deprive the empire of his services at this moment? and whether he has not amply acquitted his faith towards them by breaking off the late negotiation? This point I will not dare to examine, more especially because I have not the faculty to discover what engagements or what bond of honour he can have entered into with those gentlemen, more sacred, solemn, and inviolable, than the pledge of active, zealous, and constant support he gave to Mr. Addington in February 1801. Neither should I expect from the known virtues and disinterestedness of Lord Grenville, that he would not be satisfied with the late efforts of Mr. Pitt in his favour, or refuse to release him from an unprofitable contract, which militates with the essential interests of the empire, which the great abilities of that Financier are so well calculated to sustain.

If, however, there exist circumstances which have escaped my observation, or are secret and unknown, and it is in point of fact impracticable for Mr. Pitt to take a share in his Majesty's government, or to give his servants sincere and effectual support at this crisis (which were exceedingly to be lamented) then I have no scruple to express my conviction, that the more direct and open are his hostilities, and the less respect and deference are exhibited for his authority, the less dis-

distraction, embarrassment, and discredit, will be in the power of his adherents to create or disseminate. It is not clear, that Mr. Pitt will be able to acquit himself as the chief of a party with the same *eclat* and success, as in the robes of office. His vote upon Mr. Patten's motion, is generally considered as a false step; its effects have been more fatal to his credit and popularity, than any measure he could have taken; and are scarcely less injurious to his public character, than his *unaccounted-for* and *unaccountable* resignation in 1801.

He is, therefore, by no means as much to be dreaded as an opponent, as he is to be desired for a friend. His habits and his talents, his passions, and even his tones and gestures, are calculated for office and authority. Neither do the public at this moment entertain that unqualified admiration of the mere gift of eloquence, as to prefer it to judgment, knowledge, firmness, equanimity, and other qualities of a minister, which they have lately learned to esteem and applaud; nor can any opposition be seriously formidable as long as ministers pursue the same temperate, but vigorous course, which has enabled them to triumph over every possible obstacle and impediment*.

Considering

* Since I am upon this subject of opposition, I cannot resist the temptation of expressing the desire which I have lately entertained,

- . Considering indeed the circumstances of the state, and the unparalleled dangers which approach us, one would naturally have looked for implicit unanimity, and co-operation from every part of the empire. Amongst the sacrifices we are called upon to make for our defence and preservation, the very foremost is that of our interested, unjust, and ambitious passions. The first offering upon the altar of our country, should be private rivalries, and party-hatreds. To destroy the confidence of the people in their rulers, in their armies, or in

certained, for the translation of Mr. Pitt and his party to the opposite side of the House. A great deal of perplexity arises

Armorum facie & graiarum errore Jubarum.

One cannot accustom one's ears to hear the measures of the Chancellor of the Exchequer arraigned or impeded by his *Right Honourable Friends behind him*. He ought to be able to see his opponents and they to look him in the face. Perhaps too, the Speaker himself would like a little topographical hint upon *which side* of the Debate those gentlemen *meant* to speak, for of late they have always *voted* with the Minister, and *spoken* against him. This comes very naturally from the new moral doctrine of "Men, not Measures;" but I confess I like the old customs best. Mr. Addington's situation is really very dangerous and perplexing, particularly in *the Councils of War*, where the heaviest battery is often opened upon his rear, and his flanks are very much exposed to the attack of his honorable Friends, who fight *upon his side against him*. In the name of Candour, what have Mr. Pitt and Mr. Canning to do *behind the Treasury Bench*? "A plague on you! Do you call this backing of your Friends?"

their

their resources, were the very worst species of treason. At such a time, every man's knowledge, experience, and talent, is the property of the State; there ought to be no *sides* of the house, no opposition. Can it be endured then to see all the experience acquired in the public service, all the weight and authority of past office and employment, directed to spread alarm and discouragement, or to impede and embarrass the public service? One thinks one sees altar against altar, and government against government, when the parts of an opposition are so distributed and sustained, as that the persons, who have been secretaries at war, oppose the recruiting of the militia; secretaries of state, attack state papers and negotiations; and chancellors of the exchequer, the taxes*. And when one observes senators, and statesmen, who have scarce turned their backs on the King's Cabinet, opposing, and contradicting, and thwarting their own measures and the principles of their own administration, one thinks

* It is singular that even those reforms in the naval departments, which have been so much opposed by the adherents and partizans of the late admiralty-board, are its own offspring—that it had presented the abuses, frauds, and peculations, and was pledged to bring forward the enquiry. They were stated, in the administration of Lord Spencer, to amount to three millions annually.

one beholds a faction more profoundly and essentially corrupt and perfidious than there is any mention of in the history of nations.

Thus we see that after official death, the same cares and employments do not survive in the political shades, as in the poetical—We cannot say,

—————*Quæ gratia currûm*
Armorumque fuit vivis, quæ cura nitentes
Pascere equos, eadem sequitur tellure repostos ;

but, on the contrary, we find them tormented with remorse and aversion for all their prior studies and pursuits, and haunted with the antipathy of every former passion and delight.

I know that I have made use of strong words, but I know that they are not stronger than the truth warrants, and the occasion demands. But if I seem to any person to use harsher terms than might have been found, and to brand with more ignominy than is necessary, the profligacy I deplore, I would ask if these are times to govern phrases, to frame sentences, and observe etiquettes and punctilios ! What, when Lord Temple demands places for his family*, (insatiable family !)

* Mr. Thomas Grenville has not attended for a considerable time in his place. It is beneath his great importance to promote or assent to a single measure for the defence of his country under ministers not nominated by his family.—The Army of Reserve, the Bill for the general arming and training of his majesty's subjects, the great measures of finance, have all been deprived of his assistance and authority, even of his countenance ! He will not grace the benches of opposition
when

family !) when his family insist upon naming the King's Minister ; when Mr. Pitt refuses to serve his Sovereign, unless he can force into the cabinet the Grenvilles who are forcing him into it ; when Mr. Windham will only vote *pro forma* for military law and the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act, upon the burst of Irish Rebellion, and the massacre of the chief criminal judge * ; when Mr. Canning avows † that " his opposition is not to measures but to men ;" that " the men are every thing, and the measures nothing ;" when the whole system and anti-principle (if I may hazard such a word) of the late administration, is to vilify and discredit the

when he dares not to oppose. He will not lend even his presence and neutrality to the plans for arming the country. doubtless because it cannot now be saved, by any men but those who abandoned it the year before the last !

I am persuaded, however, that the country will very deeply resent the conduct of every one of its representatives who acts like Mr. T. Grenville. These absences are perverse, pre-
vish, and, perhaps, unconstitutional : they act, however, in a contrary sense to what is intended. If ever there were a case where silence inferred consent, it is here : for it cannot be suspected, that with a *possibility of opposing*, we should have lost the benefit of Mr. Grenville's opinion and eloquence. Where I to hazard a conjecture, it would be this, that the Right Honourable Gentleman is preparing a very *alarming* speech for the last day of the Session, a speech of *effect*, which will send a portion of the House home panic-struck, to spread *proper* sentiments among their constituents.

* July 28.

† Parl. Reg. Dec. 8.

government, of whose measures they dare not but approve; when Mr. Canning would impeach, and Mr. Pitt would keep impeachment hanging over the heads of those ministers, whose conduct in every individual instance he has defended or applauded; when popular and factious cries are adopted to intercept the resources of the exchequer, when the militia is decried and discredited, not by jacobins and traitors, but by ex-secretaries at war, and ex-ministers of the finances; when discouragement and despondency are spread among the people by great military characters, and we are warned of the capture of the capital, and the surrender of the country! when I see the House of Commons transmuted into a council of war*, shall I call it, or a council of alarm, discouragement, and trepidation! when every cry and every artifice is adopted to discredit the measures of government, and destroy the confidence of the country—I ask if this be a moment to stop for nice and deliberate expressions? and whether these gentlemen are entitled to so much deference from others, who are so careless of their own character and reputation, as to be not only at variance, but in direct hostility and

* With the highest degree of respect and consideration for Mr. Abbot, I must venture to say, as an observer, that it would have given satisfaction, if he had thought himself warranted to interrupt these discussions,

antithesis with their own principles and measures, with their characters, and their whole lives ?

The ministers certainly could not be confronted by a minority of more abilities, of more personal weight in the country, from connexion and property, and of more influence from the mass of former obligation, which during seventeen years they have conferred with no sparing hand. The utter want, however, of principle, and even of pretext for their opposition, and the too great confidence in their own talents and importance, which has led to very extraordinary confessions, has deprived this party of every thing which could render it popular or formidable ; besides which, " I have observed a very general apprehension to prevail in the case that they were to be once more entrusted with the guidance of affairs, lest upon the approach of any great danger or calamity which might threaten the country, they should again abandon their posts, with as much precipitation as they did in 1801.

As far as public opinion is concerned, this sentiment must long be fatal to their return to power, and it may be added, that no small proportion of those persons who most strenuously supported them, will never pardon the resignation, because they certainly did give their votes unqualified, and assented to measures they did
not

. not always approve of, upon the supposition, that they had no choice but so strengthen a government which they considered as bound and pledged to abide the fate of the country. These persons consider themselves as having been cheated out of their former support upon false pretences, and they will no doubt insist upon a full and satisfactory explanation of the real causes of these resignations, before they will give their confidence a second time. Indeed, what would be the situation of the country (at this crisis of foreign danger, internal difficulty, and Irish Rebellion) under a ministry whom it would be in the power of the most insignificant member of the House to displace at any moment, by simply bringing forward the Irish Catholic question?

I am not aware of more than one case in which Mr. Fox and *his* minority could be considered as a possible administration, and that is the success of the invasion, or some other great disaster which should lay us at the feet of France. He might, perhaps, be the vice-president of the Britannic Republic, but there is little prospect of his ever being the minister of an English King.

Of the ministers it will be permitted me to say, that I think they have hitherto deserved well of the country; and that they have been called to act under circumstances in which it

was

was impossible to have done so, without possessing great ability, great prudence, and great fortitude. They have certainly had to contend against the greatest ability, and as they have not been worsted in the contest, it seems to be but an ill compliment to their enemies to reproach them with incapability. Such vague and general incivilities (for they are not charges) shew only ill-temper and disappointment; and has proof has repeatedly been called for in vain, and there is so much proof upon the other hand, to persevere in it argues little sensibility to the shame of being refuted.

The great business of the country is its DEFENCE; and I am very much mistaken if that can be promoted by indifference to measures, and partiality to men. I think a great deal too much has been said about individuals, too much about Mr. Addington and Mr. Pitt. I protest I cannot adopt this novel heresy, and I hope it will never form an article in our political creed. In this fearful crisis of our country, I hope, that we have no other cause, no interest but hers! that we contend not for patrons, but for duties; not for parties, but for the state; and that we all rally round our SOVEREIGN and *his* ministers, *his* lieutenants, and *his* generals; round *all* who have *his* confidence and commission. I am sure this is the faith of the constitution, and that by this alone we can be saved!!!

A very

A very few words will now bring these hasty remarks to a conclusion. The Pitt and Grenville party, with all their experience and ability, and the great services which they have sometimes rendered the country, by some fatality or other have never understood its character nor enjoyed its affection.

History does not shew so gross an instance of credulous self-love and infatuated vanity, as the opinion they daily manifest, that their absence from the King's councils is regretted by the public; that the people desire their return to power; that the King has made an unpopular use of his prerogative in the present selection of his counsellors!

I am far from denying the talents or the virtues of their House; I do not even vindicate the country from some degree of ingratitude; but, as truth, I am compelled to acknowledge that they never were beloved nor endeared to it. Like the Claudian Family in Rome, (than which none was more fruitful of great and celebrated men) they do not coalesce and assimilate with the genius and temper of their country. To the catalogue of all their merits, and the praises to which they have an undoubted claim, we must add

Nisi in Liberâ Civitate nati essent.

The present ministers, I think, have this advantage, this happiness, over them, that they
fall

fall in with the character of the nation. I distinguish nothing personal in their sway; the men are not visible in the acts of their authority; they seem to be the servants, not the masters of the public; the nation governs *itself* more under them, and for them. Convinced, persuaded, and prepared, the people demand those laws and measures which used to be imposed upon them; they require those levies and taxes which were so lately felt as burthens and hardships. They identify themselves with a government which confides in them. The late ministry were often urged by their most strenuous supporters to place more reliance upon the people, but they never, as I have observed, understood their character, their temper, or their spirit. One of the first acts of their successors was, to restore the Habeas Corpus Act, and to repeal the Bills against Sedition. The trials of Despard and his accomplices were conducted in the ordinary course, like simple felonies, without alarm, without secret committees, without demonstrations of jealousy and mistrust. They now reap the fruit of their temper or their policy, for I have little scruple to assert, that without an appearance of force or power, without the reluctance of a single subject, by the confidence and affection of the people alone, they have been able to carry the greatest measures, of which there is either
 record

record or tradition in the history of the empire.

Upon the 18th of May, Lord Whitworth's return from Paris was announced to parliament. —Little more than two months have elapsed, and the Militia, the Supplementary Militia, the Army of Reserve, amounting together to one hundred and sixty thousand men, have been added to the regiments of the line; and a Bill has received the Royal assent for arming the whole population of the island. It is true, Mr. Pitt and the Grenvilles think a great deal more might have been done and a great deal quicker —*quicker* than two months; *more* than all.— But this is the characteristic failing and misfortune of their family. For they would have had it *their* measure, and not the *nation's*; it would have been called *their* act, and now it is the people's! For effect and greatness, all must have been voted at once, the operation of each impeded by the others, and the whole imposed as law and authority, blamed, eluded, or resisted. I cannot think that an act of legislation can create a public spirit; but such an act as the general levy of the population of an empire, if it *precede* a public spirit, were a dangerous insurrection, the immediate precursor and instrument of its fall. As to the reproach of tardiness, therefore, it can have no other source than ignorance, or detraction; igno-

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rance

rance profound and pitiable, if its authors think the Ministers *could* have brought in the bill till the people called for it; rancorous and base detraction, if they have the smallest knowledge of the history of men, or the most common rudiments of the science of government.

I have now completed a most ungracious and unpleasant task, to which I have submitted only from a sense of public duty, and a desire to render some service to the country. Parties are the natural disease of a free and popular constitution; and in mixed governments, they are perhaps necessary to represent and defend the respective powers and principles of the system.

This at least is their true use and action; and thus applied, their collisions have often produced those salutary crises, which have renovated and invigorated States, forcing them back, as it were, to the fountains of their prosperity, and to the principles and auspices from which they departed. It were a vain parade of learning to enumerate those parties, which representing and struggling for a particular principle of government, the rights of a family, or the dogmas of religion, have filled the pages of history with great and interesting transactions—the annals of our country abound with instances which we cannot always call to mind without sorrow and confusion; but never till the present moment, did a party arise without the
pretence

pretence at least, of some public principle and some national object, to dignify or disguise it: "The church was in danger;" "the succession was in danger;" "the constitution was invaded;" "a war was wanton and unnecessary;" but some pretence, some decent shred of hypocrisy has ever hitherto been spread over the nakedness of ambition.—It remained for our own times to present the spectacle of a family-compact, and a combination of wealth and influence, openly claiming the first offices of the State as their right, insisting upon nominating each other in their turn for the King's Cabinet, and professing their disregard of measures and their attachments and antipathy to men.

Certainly I have nothing exaggerated, I have set down nothing in malice. But I do deeply feel and tremble at the profligacy I am describing. When I consider the state of the empire, and the imminent perils which threaten our existence, I think a scramble for place is little different from the pillage of a wreck; and to embarrass or desert the common safety and defence for private objects of avarice and ambition, appears the foulest act of Treason and Parricide which can be committed.

I confess I think his Majesty's Ministers have a *right* to all our support, co-operation, and assistance. I should not *dare*, for light and trivial motives, at this terrible hour, to encrease their difficulties

difficulties, diminish their credit, or shake the confidence of the people; I do not know that one ought to bring forward serious causes of complaint (if they existed) at a time when unanimity alone can preserve the empire. I consider them abstractedly as the KING's servants: faithful, able, vigorous, and fortunate, they have hitherto proved, and, I trust, will continue. But at all events, under them we must fight for all that is dear and sacred to humanity; by their side we shall conquer or lie down. I think there is no other party for us to take, and I am sure there is no duty more imperious and binding.

LONDON,
Sept. 5th, 1803.

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STRICTURES
ON THE
NECESSITY
OF
INVIOLABLY MAINTAINING
THE
NAVIGATION AND COLONIAL SYSTEM
OF
GREAT BRITAIN.

BY LORD SHEFFIELD.

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1804.

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STRICTURES,

§c.

THE Navigation Laws of Great Britain afford topics of discussion equally important to the statesman and the merchant. Other subjects, the fashion of the day, may claim the speculation of the hour ; but laws which embrace principles of wide extent and national concern, and which experience has learned to regard as the support and stay of the naval strength of this nation, and as essentially interwoven with its commercial superiority, merit attention and discussions of a very different nature. Foreign countries, conceiving themselves to be injured in proportion as we prosper, have often borne

B

unwilling

unwilling testimony to the wisdom with which they were formed, and the good consequences which they produce ; for they have often struggled by the artifice of negotiation, or by the insolence of menace, to induce us to relax or to renounce them. Citizen Hauterive, after having shewn that they are “ the original cause of the fatal preponderancy of the English marine,” exercised all his powers of sophistry and misrepresentation, to render them objects of general jealousy and hostility*. America has endeavoured, by every species of management, to procure the suspension or renunciation of a most essential part of them. And the North of Europe has supplied opponents also who have tried their strength and diplomatic skill in the same field. But the very reason which has induced all these to oppose and condemn, should induce us to guard and protect the system. The object of attack on one side, should obviously become that of defence on the other ; and every syllable

* L’Etat de la France, a la fin de l’An. 8.

syllable of reprobation on this point, which is heard from abroad, should be regarded by us at home as virtual applause.

I have frequently considered, with much attention, the Navigation Laws of which I have spoken ; and the sentiments which I have entertained of them, and which have been long before the public, have not, as I think, been yet refuted. But new occurrences having led to new inquiries, these have confirmed and increased my former convictions. I see, more and more, both with respect to the commerce and independence of the nation, the essential importance of the whole code ; and as the persuasions which I am thus taught to entertain, concern a question of such serious consequence, and a question, too, which, from the circumstances of the times, may become again, and speedily, a subject of negotiation, I shall freely submit them to the judgment and consideration of the country.

Motives of the
Work.

At a period, it is true, such as the present, when we hear from the opposite shores nothing

but the menaces of inveterate and exterminating hostility, and are called on to struggle with the power and ambition of France, for our very existence as a people, it may be thought that I should rather endeavour to urge and animate the military spirit of the nation, than to direct its attention to the laws and regulations of navigation and trade.

Apprehension of
new suspensions
and sacrifices of the
Navigation
Laws.

But, perhaps, it is at this very period, when the country is so completely and properly occupied in preparations for defence, that it is most necessary to direct the consideration of men to the subject I am to discuss, so far, at least, as to prevent any hasty decision, of which the mischief would be irretrievable, on such an important point. I foresee, as I conceive, some occurrences which may incline a false and hasty policy to suspend the principle of those Navigation Laws, on which, indisputably, our trade and our navy depend. The public difficulties may encourage injurious claims and requisitions: the same cause may induce men, in a temporizing moment, and for the sake of conciliation,

liation, to accede to demands which require the most patient and careful examination : and as, in the midst of as full occupation as that of any other volunteer*, I have found leisure to state this national question in writing, I hope others may find leisure to read what I have stated.

Several Acts, directly militating against the Navigation Laws, have been passed within a Exposition of late suspending Acts, &c. few years ; and it may be necessary briefly to enumerate some of them, before I proceed to argue on the impolicy by which they were dictated, or with which they may be renewed.

The law commonly known by the name of 35 Geo. III. the Dutch Property Act, and which very much extended the privileges of neutral bottoms, was passed in the 35th of George the Third, for the avowed purpose of securing the property of the Dutch Emigrants.

In the next year, the 36th of George the 36th c. 17 Do.
B 3
Third,

* Commanding a legion of 1260 Volunteers.

Third, c. 17, an Act was passed, giving power to the Privy Council to permit all vessels, under the same pretence, to bring from any country goods of any sort, which, according to the Navigation Laws, could be imported only by ships, duly navigated, of the countries from whence the goods were brought, or by British ships duly navigated.

According to this law, all merchandize imported in foreign ships was to pay no duty, until taken out of the warehouse for consumption, though the like merchandize, if brought in British vessels, was charged with duty immediately on importation. Here, then, was a manifest injury to the British merchant. Yet if British ships had been permitted to enter their goods under the same power, there would have been still greater mischief in the regulation: for, in such case, we should have had no British ships duly navigated; or, at least, those which were not duly navigated, and foreign vessels, would have still enjoyed superior advantages, because they
could

would have more easily completed their crews,
and at lower wages.

These Acts of the 35th and 36th were further ^{39th 40th and} continued by the Acts of the 39th and the 40th, ^{42d. Geo. II} until the 1st of January 1804; and, finally, an Act passed in the 42d of the King, to terminate also in the year 1804, for repealing these several Acts, or such of them as had not been previously repealed, and for enabling the Privy Council to permit goods to be imported in ships of any country, of not less than 100 tons, or in British ships navigated according to law, from any part of America or the West Indies, not under the dominion of his Majesty.

For these laws there was not even a pretence ^{Pretended motive.} but such as referred to temporary circumstances. During the late war, when, in consequence of the disturbed state of the greater part of the two hemispheres, a very considerable portion of the produce of the world was likely to be brought into this country for safety or for a market, and many of our trading vessels were unavoidably

B 4

taken

taken into the service of Government, it was thought advisable, for the present, to suffer all goods to be imported in neutral ships. A great importation consequently took place of the product of the countries at war, as well as of neutral nations, and the goods were permitted to be warehoused, both for *home consumption* and re-exportation.

Real impo-
licy and mischief
of these Acts.

But, though the laws to which I alluded may have arisen, in the whole or in part, from such principles or such pretences, they are not, therefore, to be vindicated. Some of them afforded great advantages to foreign ships, in permitting articles of merchandize to be stored, which they did not allow to British vessels ; and all of them, in principle, obviously amounted to a complete suspension of an essential part of our navigation system, and were admitted, I should think, through laxity of principles, and want of perception of the true spirit of our Navigation Laws. They were favoured, indeed, by the idea, that merchandize could not be brought into this country without leaving something behind

behind on re-exportation ; and they were not perhaps so highly objectionable at the period when our shipping and seamen were so fully employed during the war. But here ends the apology which is to be offered for them ; and why any of them should have been allowed to continue in force after the peace, and till 1804, I think it will not be easy to assign a reason.

These Acts, at the same time that they may have augmented the quantity of merchandize brought to this country, greatly increased also the quantity of foreign tonnage employed in our carrying trade ; and all the advantages thus held out to foreign shipping, were peculiarly calculated to establish that trade in the hands of the Americans, on the conclusion of the war, when such a number of transports, and so many ships, seamen and artificers, were to be discharged from the public service as would be fully equal to the carrying on of the whole of our commerce. Under such circumstances, therefore, what was to be the probable result ? Those ships were to be laid up by discouragement in
our

our ports to rot, and those seamen, together with the numerous classes of persons occupied in ship-building, were to be dispersed abroad in search of employment, and many to be seduced into the services of other nations, or to pass over to America, and, consequently, they and their progeny to be lost to their native country for ever.

The mischief, indeed, which was foreseen, arising from these measures, was soon felt. The most respectable meetings of merchants were held from time to time, and very proper representations have been laid before the minister and the public, in which it is strongly stated, that many ship owners, no longer being able to freight their vessels, were obliged to charter them to any foreigners that would take them, at a very low price; and that many ships, of great value, to the amount of an immense quantity of tonnage, and some of which cost their owners from 15,000*l.* to 20,000*l.* each, were left unoccupied, and continued decaying in harbour. It is no wonder, therefore, that property in ship-

ping

ping experienced great depreciation. Not a few who embarked their capitals in that property have suffered severe losses. Speculation has been cramped and deterred. And we who have been invidiously termed the carriers of Europe, have no longer the means of keeping in employment a large quantity of shipping now on hand, and which will soon rot in the ports where they are laid up*.

I object, therefore, to the suspension of any part of the Navigation Laws of Great Britain. <sup>Consequent ob-
jections.</sup>
I object, in this instance, because such suspension must render all England a free port, of the consequences of which, I conceive, neither the legislature nor the country are sufficiently aware; and because, however it may seem to be subservient to partial and mistaken interests, it is, for so much, a sacrifice of those old and established principles, under which we have flourished, and which have so long been the
object

* See Case of the Owners of British Ships, &c. published 3d December 1803.

object of applause and imitation, both at home and abroad.

**The violation of
the Navigation
Laws injurious
to every branch
of our Marine.**

It might be thought almost superfluous to state, except for the purpose of explanation, how necessary it is to encourage, in a country like ours, the employment of Seamen, and to retain the various artificers necessary to the manufacture of ship-building ; a manufacture infinitely more essential in an empire, dependent on its marine, even than that of wool. Of the latter manufacture we are usually careful, and any proposition by which it might be endangered, would be received with indignation. But the former, I am sorry to say, is often neglected or impeded ; and repeated violations of our colonial and navigation code have taken place, within a few years, and with little observation. As far as mere words and general expressions can go, our Navigation Laws have strenuous assertors ; but few, very few indeed, look to the principle or object of those laws, though the violations of them that have taken place, tended obviously to diminish the means of retaining

retaining our seamen, and the multitude of persons employed in the several branches of ship-building and rigging; and consequently, to deprive us of the power of equipping, when necessary, a great naval force; or, in other words, of resisting our enemies, and of maintaining our prosperity and our independence.

At best, and under all the operation of our Navigation Laws, it is not easy to retain our seamen and our naval artizans, and to equip such a force. Adverse to the prompt equipment of a great naval force. It generally requires two years of exertion and of war to put our navy on an adequate footing; and the want of sailors is occasionally so great, that we can scarcely supply our fleet by the harshest measures, and sometimes see many of our vessels laid up through the want of crews. If the sailors, then, be discouraged, as they must be by those suspensions or infringements which I combat, the consequences cannot but be mischievous in the extreme. The enemy may be at our doors before we shall be prepared to resist; and the boasted bulwarks

bulwarks of England may become little more than dismantled and unavailing citadels.

Consequence al-
ready experi-
enced.

The notion of encouraging the Americans to build ships for us, in order that they might be enabled to pay for the manufactures with which we supplied them, is utterly indefensible. There would be equal reason to allow the Dutch the same advantage with the same view. The consequence of this very encouragement has been already felt, and as long as it is continued, the classes of artificers connected with ship-building were found to emigrate in much greater numbers than those of any other manufacture.

Extraordinary
decline of Bri-
tish tonnage.

The following statement, produced with exultation by the Americans themselves, will prove that, as the quantity of British tonnage occupied in the American trade has diminished, under the system which has been pursued, that of America has uniformly and proportionably increased :

1789	British tonnage.....	72,000
	American do.	21,000
1792	British tonnage.....	51,000
	American do.	60,000
1800	British tonnage.....	14,000
	American do.	110,000

In this manner has England suffered from a foolish policy, and every step which deviated from her established Navigation Laws, has proved an injury to the trade, which, in wiser times, has been so cautiously encouraged, as one of the most fertile sources of political consequence and national wealth.

In the above instance, at least, the Americans have not exaggerated, as will appear from the following account which was laid on the table of the House of Commons on the 25th of February 1802.

Account of the number of vessels, with their tonnage, which have cleared inwards and outwards,

wards, between Great Britain and the American States, in the following years :

		British.		Americans.	
		<i>Ships,</i>	<i>Tonnage.</i>	<i>Ships,</i>	<i>Tonnage.</i>
1790	Outwards.....	245	50,977	218	39,441
	Inwards.....	312	64,197	246	45,234
1791	Outwards.....	253	55,328	291	55,806
	Inwards.....	247	53,102	318	62,253
1792	Outwards.....	223	50,963	285	59,414
	Inwards.....	197	42,035	313	64,085
1799	Outwards.....	57	14,267	354	78,683
	Inwards.....	42	9,796	313	75,225
1800	Outwards.....	62	14,381	507	112,596
	Inwards.....	77	27,144	550	124,015

American exultation.

The Americans, indeed, who have exhibited the former account, appear to be a little sarcastic on the occasion. But their sarcasms may be instructive. While they dwell on the folly which presumed to tamper with the Navigation Laws of England, they inform us, that America was busy in forming and maintaining a Navigation Act of her own : while, as patriots, they enjoy the prospect of the increasing prosperity

prosperity of their country, they triumph, as rivals, in the decline of Britain. "Think of this," says one of them, "think of this, ye sages of Britain, and if you can account for the phenomenon on any other principle than the superior policy of my country, it is more than I can !"

It is true, the policy of America has not been unwise ; it affords a striking contrast to our weakness, and virtually reproaches us for our neglect of all sound and rational principles. Yet, if we be thus reminded that, at the very moment when we were extending and renouncing to the Americans our carrying trade, they were active, by all possible restrictions, to exclude us from theirs ; we should also recollect, and be instructed by the recollection, that our liberality was but that of the prodigal who gives without return, and who enriches others to impoverish himself*.

c

It

* "It was found expedient," says General Smith, in the debate in the Lower House of Congress on the 16th

December

A more particular view of the subject.

It may be useful as well as curious to consider this subject a little more minutely. In the year 1800, a census was taken, and returned to Congress in the year 1801; according to which the progress of the tonnage, commerce, and revenue, of the United States, were found to be as follows :

	Tons of Shipping.	Men.
In 1800.	939,000	56,340
In 1790.....	450,000	27,000
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Increase in ten years	489,000	29,000

COM-

December 1801, “to adopt a system pursued by other Nations, in laying such duties as would discriminate between our own and foreign tonnage, and the measure operated like a charm; for, contrary to the expectation of most men, our tonnage doubled in a short period, and we will not only very soon be able to carry all our own produce, *but to enter largely into trade abroad.*” Very true, but their tonnage was *doubled* at our expence; and we most amicably laboured in unison with themselves to enable them to *enter largely into trade abroad.*

COMMERCE AND REVENUE.

Dollars.

The American produce exported in	
1800, amounted to.....	32,000,000
Ditto in 1790.....	14,000,000
	<hr/>
Increase in ten years	18,000,000
	<hr/>

Dollars.

The foreign commodities brought	
into the country for re-exportation	
in 1800, amounted to.....	30,000,000
Ditto in 1790.....	2,000,000
	<hr/>
Increase in ten years	28,000,000
	<hr/>

The revenue in 1801 is estimated at	11,000,000
Ditto in 1789 amounted to.....	6,124,000
	<hr/>
Increase in eleven years	5,235,000

This is a splendid view of rapidly progressive prosperity. But it was in this very period of

ten years that our carrying trade with America most rapidly declined; that our tonnage employed in that trade fell, according to the American account, from 72,000 to 14,000; that the suspension of our Navigation Laws operated principally in favour of the United States; that we even opened to them a free trade with the British settlements in the East; and that we *anticipated* their expectations on the subject of the abolition of the duties, and of the counter-vailing duties permitted under the treaty of 1794*. Shall it, then, any longer be said, that

Britain

* “We find,” says Mr. President Jefferson, in his address to Congress on the 15th December 1802, “in some parts of Europe, monopolizing discriminations; which, in the form of duties, tend effectually to prohibit the carrying thither our own produce in our own vessels.

But it is with satisfaction I lay before you an Act of the British Parliament, *anticipating* this subject, so far as to authorize a mutual abolition of the duties and counter-vailing duties permitted under the treaty of 1794. It shews, on their part, a spirit of moderation and justice,* &c. &c. We shall soon see what this *moderation* and *justice* were.

Britain has not cherished this thriving branch of American prosperity at the expence of her own welfare? or can we yet deny *that we have given, but not received, and they have received, but not given?*

It is not because I regret the increase of their trade that I make these observations; but I shall not shrink from asserting the impolicy of suffering that increase to arise from the errors and sacrifices of this country, and to its essential detriment. . . :

Observations dictated not by jealousy of American prosperity, but regret for the sacrifices of Britain.

The countervailing duties which were laid in this country, were posterior and provoked, and dictated and compelled by the absurd yet designing conduct of the Americans themselves. It is well known that on the peace and separation of the Americans from Great Britain, they and their abettors in this country, entertained the extraordinary notion that, in matters of trade, they should not be considered by Great Britain as foreigners, though they themselves had chosen and asserted that very situation; and they par-

Countervailing duties, their origin and termination.

ticularly pretended, in direct opposition to our whole colonial and navigation principles, that they should have a free trade to our West-India Colonies. They did not even rest their claims on the arguments of negotiation, but endeavoured to sustain them by stronger means: and, vainly flattering themselves, that the trade with them was absolutely necessary to our commercial existence, they attempted to frighten us into concession, by laying extraordinary and extravagant duties on all merchandize coming from hence, and particularly on our shipping. They did not conceive, at the time, that we should have had the spirit to counteract such a measure by counter-vailing duties. But they found themselves mistaken; and, discovering that the duties to be paid by them would far exceed those which they had imposed on us, as the quantity of their shipping employed in the trade between the two countries was much greater than ours, they very wisely desired that the duties on both sides should cease. The “*moderation and justice*” of Great Britain, as they were termed by Mr. President Jefferson, consented, accordingly, to this
mutual

mutual abolition of duty. A benefit was renounced by this country which resulted from our retaliating the injurious measures of America. And the Americans, after having tried the effect of a crooked policy, were placed on the footing of the most favoured nations ; to which, indeed, there can be no objection, unless our Navigation Laws are to be suspended, by the operation of some Dutch Property Act, or any other law to the same effect.

If we were even indebted to America for exclusive favour and kindness, I scarcely think we should renounce the means of sustaining the trade and independence of Great Britain. To sacrifice that which concerns the very existence of a nation, must be very absurd and very criminal. The Americans, however, as we have already seen, take care, day after day, that we shall not be in their debt. Their policy, (which I do not condemn though I would be instructed by it) looks not to confer, but to receive. They negotiate and they obtain, and they then talk of "*liberality and justice ;*" but, while donation

is considered and stated as equity, they leave to us the praise of being just, not generous, and wisely reserve for themselves the solid advantages of a menacing and successful negotiation*.

Some

* I should not state myself thus without reason. The war which has been rekindled in Europe has afforded the Americans the opportunity of making new acquisitions, to which, at any other period, neither France nor Spain would have consented; and the menacing attitude in which they placed themselves, seems to have succeeded admirably to their wishes. They have given sufficient hints of what may be expected from them, and we should therefore be on our guard. A late report on the subject of Louisiana and the Mississippi, after stating, in an impressive tone, the absolute necessity of acquiring that immense country and river, says, very deliberately, that “the Floridas, too, must be, at one time or another, annexed to America, by purchase or by conquest.” I hope we are not yet in the situation of being told, that Jamaica is also necessary to the *arrondissement* of their policy.— In this instance, the scholar has improved upon his master; since Buonaparte, even in his *familiar* conversation with Lord Whitworth, did not presume to say more than that

Some of the West-India merchants and planters join in the claims advanced by the Americans; and seem to conceive that they would derive much more benefit than can be reasonably expected, from the opening of their ports to the American

Unreasonable claims and conduct of some West India merchants.

that "sooner or later, Egypt would belong to France, either by the falling to pieces of the Turkish Empire, or by some arrangement with the Porte."

Nations as well as individuals are liable to fits of wrong-headedness; sometimes, I believe, termed enthusiasm, and relative to which there can be no calculation. Otherwise, I should think there would be little danger of the Americans choosing absolute war with us, in consequence of our maintaining the old navigation principles of the country. They are a sensible people. Their minds are turned to considerations of their own interest; the interior of their country could not possibly be benefited by hostilities with us: and the mischiefs which could be done to our commerce by privateers, manned with renegadoes from Great Britain, would afford no compensation for the entire derangement of their trade, the chief dependence of their maritime towns, in which is contained the greater part of their population, power, and wealth.

American shipping. On this subject my opinion has never varied. The demands of a few interested or speculative men are not to be listened to, when they are hostile to the general welfare; and, though some benefit might accrue, which, however, we shall soon see cannot be obtained, from the measures proposed, I should yet maintain, what long experience and repeated information have taught me to believe, that the policy of excluding foreign shipping from our colonies, and in truth the whole navigation system, are founded in the clearest right and most perfect wisdom.

The right of
England to
frame Colo-
nial and Na-
vigation
Laws, ex-
amined and
stated.

In many instances of late, as I have already observed, foreign writers have been anxious to decry the Navigation Laws of England, as injurious to the welfare of surrounding nations. Prejudice, passion, partiality, and interest, have all conspired to excite much ill-will, and abundant jealousy, on a question which, if fairly stated, would produce no such effect. It is not merely America; it is not merely the North of Europe that has promoted discussions of this nature.

nature. The government of France has particularly encouraged and inflamed such discussion in other nations; and one of its most sophistical and determined agents, Monsieur Hauterive, secretary to Monsieur Talleyrand, secretary for foreign affairs, having been employed on the subject, a volume has issued from the Consular press to detail to all Europe the *commercial crimes* of Great Britain, and the *monstrous depravity* of her commercial laws. It may not, therefore, be improper to enter a little into the inquiry which thus suggests itself; and, if error and prejudice have gone abroad, on a topic which so immediately concerns the character and welfare of this country, I hope I shall not be censured as digressive, if I very briefly endeavour to correct them.

In a general view it will scarcely be maintained by reasonable men, that Great Britain has been guilty of any injustice towards other nations in framing such a system of Navigation Laws as her circumstances required. Every country has an unqualified right to open or close
its

its ports in whatever manner the welfare of its people may demand. The law of nations, in the opinion of Grotius, Puffendorf and Vattel, has nothing to do with regulations for promoting the internal industry of a people, provided those regulations infringe no actual right of other States; and no government has even yet presumed to demand an unqualified admission to foreign ports, but such as were at its mercy. The universal practice is founded on these principles. All nations have thought themselves permitted to regulate their trade by prohibitive statutes. We see every where commercial restraints continued and multiplied. And no legislature has ever rejected Navigation Acts, but on the contrary adopted them, whenever it was their interest to do so; nor have they ever afforded unrestricted entrance to foreign trade from any tender regard to the advantage of other countries. America has not been so liberal. The Maritime Powers of the North of Europe have not displayed such *enlightened* policy. France, amid all her boasts of liberty and equality, and all her out-cries against the commerce of England,

has

has demonstrated to the world, by decree after decree, varied, annulled, or renewed as her policy required, that she also has no objection to extend her *despotism* over the ocean*. We are not therefore to say, that Britain only is unjust, because

* See Gentz's State of Europe before and after the French Revolution.—France knows very well when to affect the right and when to follow the expedient; but even when she appears to withdraw her power, she is still, in reality, occupied in what has been termed by Camille Desmoulins, “*the sublime vocation of disorganizing Europe.*” She has lately, indeed, talked much, by her declaimer Hauterive, of commercial freedom, of open ports, and unrestricted trade, because she has no commerce left to be regulated by prohibition, and because she wishes to contrast the liberality which costs her nothing, with the pretended tyranny of England. But when occasion required, she had no difficulty in retracting all these liberal opinions and decrees. Mons. Ræderer, in his “*Dix Huit Brumaire,*” tells us (and he occupied a high office in the French Government), that the Batavian, Helvetic, and Cisalpine Republics, have derived from their union with France nothing but rapine, devastation and anarchy; that the depredations committed by the French privateers principally

cause she, too, thinks it proper to promote and regulate by law the commercial activity of her people, and to exercise a power over her own ports, productions, merchants and ships.

All well informed writers on the subject have admitted, that commercial regulation, of this nature, is no infringement of the law of nations.

But

pally led to the rupture between America¹ and France; and that the Danish Flag was eternally subjected to equal vexations and affronts. He adds, what attests the most overbearing despotism, that, "when the people of Holland sent supplies of grain to their colonies, which, otherwise, must surrender to the English, from absolute want, the supplies were audaciously intercepted by the French privateers, and the vessels which contained them declared good prizes, under the authority of vexatious laws, and, sometimes, by judges immediately interested in the trade of the privateers themselves," p. 165, &c.—This is the mild, liberal, and magnanimous France, under whose auspices liberty is to be given to the Sea, and the Commercial Despotism of Great Britain to be humbled in the dust!

But the argument becomes yet stronger, if we suppose that such commercial regulation may be necessary, not merely to the trade, but to the safety and independence of a nation. If a country, for instance, be in danger of famine, or if her security depend upon her armies and fleets, would it not be absurd to say, that she may not, without a breach of the law of nations, prescribe rules for her corn trade, or provide for the maintenance of her fleets and armies?—England is in this very situation. A navy is essential to her existence; an extensive navigation is required to support her navy; and the first principles of preservative justice, consequently, warrant her to promote her navigation, by such internal and external regulations as do not affect the absolute right of foreign States.

Having complained of the misrepresentations and cavils of foreign writers, on the subject of our commercial system, I have much pleasure in observing, that Mr. Gentz has ably supported the right of every independent country to make such laws as it may deem necessary to regulate its trade

*Some opinions
of Mr. Gentz
reviewed.*

trade and navigation*. I respect his judgment, candour and learning, and I therefore still more regret that he should have advanced some unfounded and erroneous opinions on the spirit and tendency of the Navigation Laws of Great Britain. As a foreigner, perhaps, he could not obtain sufficient information on a question of so local a nature ; and, if I should advert at all to the errors which affect that part of his work to which I allude, I shall do so not to censure the author, but to point out the mistake.

: . He

* Citizen Hauterive's work is a choice specimen of modern French declamation and verbiage, equally void of taste and regardless of fact. It was not necessary to notice it in this country, but it has induced M. Gentz, Counsellor at War to his Prussian Majesty, &c. to publish on the Continent, where it will be very useful, an answer, which, in respect to clearness, good-sense, and sound political discussion, has seldom been surpassed. The excellent statement in the translator's preface respecting the question of Neutral Bottoms, renders further reading on that subject perfectly unnecessary.

He says the Navigation Laws are “*commercially injurious*” to us, but he admits they are • politically wise. Yet if, (as I flatter myself I have shewn, or shall be able to shew) they promote the employment, and augment the number of our seamen ; if they encourage ship-building and all the useful arts connected with that essential trade ; if they consequently provide occupations for innumerable artizans ; if they secure to us the carriage of our own produce, as well as the supply of the most valuable markets, they cannot possibly be *commercially injurious* to us. Mr. Gentz himself admits, “that they are important instruments of the greatness and security of the State—that they have afforded a powerful stimulative to the commercial marine of England—that they have tended to secure to the nation, the freight trade, that great source of the former astonishing riches of Holland—that the consummation of them has been the consequence of the most judicious policy—that they compelled the English to cultivate with their own vessels, their own sailors, and their own capitals, many branches of foreign trade which

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would,

would, *otherwise*, have remained, partly or entirely in the hands of strangers—that they encouraged a branch of national industry which contributed to the security and independence of Great Britain—and that, as he quotes Mr. Adam Smith, however they may have been dictated by national antipathy, they are, nevertheless, as wise as if they had been the productions of consummate wisdom*.” Here, then, there is no reason for regarding them as injurious to the commerce of Great Britain; and the respectable writer has admitted premises, from which a conclusion might be drawn very different from the inferences he has stated.

For my own part, I see every where, and on every occasion, decided proofs both of the commercial

* The notion that the Navigation Law of Cromwell was merely an effort of resentment against the Dutch, in 1651, is erroneous. The principle is to be found in the early Charters for founding Colonies in America, and long before in the Maritime Law of Europe.

merciat and political utility of those laws, the effects of which have been so erroneously described. Defence and independence are more important than wealth, and therefore, if they contributed only to the former, we should abundantly prize them. But they are the foundation of the whole, both of our maritime power and trade. Under their influence English commerce has diffused itself over all the world. Under their influence that commerce, which, otherwise, would have fallen to decay, has been assured of the protection of an irresistible navy, and has gone forth to the four corners of the globe without the apprehension of insult or depredation. When, therefore, I observe activity, and labour, and enterprize excited and encouraged, and honourable and ample wealth thus earned and obtained, under a system which few men have the disposition fully to examine, and some with inconsiderate levity condemn, I estimate the cause by its effects, and become more and more anxious to rescue from innovation a code which has been, and continues to be, pro-

ductive of such various and inestimable advantages.

The object of
founding co-
lonies.

I further observe, that when the power and population of Great Britain were employed to establish and maintain colonies in America and the West-Indies, the object was not the founding of cities, nor the extension of empire, but it was to secure to ourselves the perpetual supply of valuable markets, and the consequent employment of a greater quantity of shipping. The colonies were, therefore, to be retained under the direction of the Mother Country, or the great object in founding them was at an end; and commercial restriction, and monopoly of the British market in return, were naturally to become the leading principles of colonial intercourse, in order to secure to the founders some return for the immense expence of establishment and protection.

English restriction not singular.

England is by no means singular in maintaining and acting on this principle. The means, indeed, which she has adopted for securing to herself

herself the trade of her colonies are more liberal than those which have been employed by other nations: but the principle of all the Mother Countries of Europe has been of the same nature and tendency; and all have alike sought to bring into their own ports the most important produce of their colonies, and to retain, in full monopoly, the exclusive advantage of their supply.

It is not now necessary to examine whether this system be impolitic or unwise. Experience and the opinion of the best informed men demonstrate that it must continue to be inviolably maintained. England is not to confer free commerce and navigation in return for the vexations and restrictions which are imposed by other nations; and though the Navigation Laws were not, as they are too firmly and too long established to be tampered with by experimental speculators, they would yet require to be cautiously and rigorously supported, if it were only because they are best correspondent with the views and regulations of other States, and be-

Rendered necessary by the systems of other countries.

D 3

cause,

cause, so long as other States confine the trade of their colonies to themselves, England has not only a right, but is bound to act in the same manner.

This is the very doctrine of the 15th of Charles II.—The Preamble to that Act very judiciously states the motive of the Navigation System to be “the maintenance of a greater correspondence and kindness between the subjects at home and those in the plantations; the making the colonies yet more advantageous to the Mother Country, in the further employment and increase of English shipping; the rendering the navigation to and from the colonies more easy and cheap; and making this kingdom a staple, not only of the commodities of the plantations, but also of other countries, for the supply of them, it being the usage of other nations to keep the plantation trade to themselves.”

By the peculiar
circumstances
and situation
of England

These general doctrines are to be confirmed by particular reasons. England, contracted in extent, and far inferior in the number of her people

people to other nations, is always liable to the hostility of enemies, whose physical strength is much superior to her own. To her insular situation, therefore, and to her Navy, she must be indebted for her defence ; but it should never be forgotten, that the moment the latter shall decline, the former will become useless. The myriads of France might, in such a case, be easily poured upon her shores ; she would be inevitably exposed to insult, and, perhaps, to subjugation ; and after having been the support of nations and the vindicatrix of Europe ; after having restrained, and often chastized, the ambition of the State, whose waking and sleeping visions are full of universal dominion, and particularly the conquest of this country ; she would be cast from the eminence to which she has ascended by the means she is recommended to support, and gradually, or suddenly, decline into a province beneath the oppression of France. Who, then, shall maintain that she should risk an iota of the system on which her naval superiority is founded ? And what must be the consequence, if abandoning that system, our ship-

wrights be discouraged ; the countless arts and artizans, connected with our marine, be permitted to decline and to diminish ; the manufacture of ships transferred to foreigners ; and the carrying trade renounced, as it has already been, in a considerable degree, to other nations ?

And of Europe.

It is not England alone that is concerned in these views—The interests of England involve those of almost all the surrounding States. Of the leading Powers of the Continent, some have been enfeebled by past exertions, and others, from whatever motive, repose in a dangerous and ill-judged neutrality. In the mean time, France advances in ambition and strength ; adds territory to territory, crushes the feeble, enslaves the cowardly, alarms the strong. Her councils are incomparably more violent and ferocious, and her powers are greater than those of Lewis XIV. or probably of any other despot ; and every day some new menace is uttered or is realized. In this situation of things, what is to become the bulwark of Europe, but the Navy of England ?

England? and what the foundation of that Navy, but Navigation and Trade? The very Powers which decry our Navigation Laws are concerned to support them; and this country derives new arguments for maintaining the code on which, even in the confession of her enemies, its greatness rests, as well from a regard to her own consequence, as from the occurrences of the times, and the gloomy circumstances of the greatest part of Europe.

Not long since Great Britain had to sustain a principle of great importance, and she sustained it with firmness and with vigour. When she was abandoned by all her allies; when the several Maritime Powers of Europe had combined against her; when she had risked her last and only army in the plains of Egypt; she, nevertheless, thought it necessary to risk her principal fleet also, against all the Powers of the North, in order to maintain her right of visiting neutral bottoms. But that right, however incumbent it might have been to maintain it, is
of

of secondary consideration, compared with the necessity of preserving inviolate the principles which have hitherto enabled us to preserve that naval superiority, without which our right to inspect neutral bottoms would be a shadow. Surely, if the right be of importance, that which empowers us to vindicate the right is incomparably more so ; the right is comparatively of temporary value, but the system on which alone it is to be preserved, is of permanent necessity ; and yet, such is our infatuation, that we often manifest a disposition to fritter away the essence of the system, even while we hazard the existence of the Empire in pursuit of inferior objects.

Importance of
navigation
system evidenced
by facts.

When I assert the importance of that system to the commercial and maritime prosperity of this country, I rest my opinion on no abstract and theoretic grounds, but on the strong and stubborn evidence of experience and of fact. For some time after the American war, the increase of our shipping was rapid and extraordinary :

nary: and Lord Liverpool*, and other very intelligent men, have not hesitated to ascribe that increase to the policy, and the policy alone, with which England then inviolably maintained her navigation and colonial principles. Whereas, in the course of the last ten or twelve years, a very extraordinary revolution has taken place: and, while we were renouncing our old and wise regulations, encouraging the carrying trade of foreigners against ourselves, and admitting other nations to ports which should have been open only to our own commerce, it has been found that the number of vessels employed by Britain in the American trade has diminished as rapidly as it formerly increased,

* I embrace with pleasure the opportunity afforded me of observing, that this country is much indebted to Lord Liverpool, for his intelligent and persevering support of the question relative to the intercourse of the Americans with our colonies; and, although he may have been obliged to yield too much on this point, there is reason to conclude that he is, in principle, the decided friend of our colonial system.

increased, and America has been enabled to boast, that the aggregate of her tonnage, including that of her small naval force, is, as we have seen, 939,000; that is within about 15,000 tons of what is known to have been the whole commercial tonnage of England in the year 1787*. Hence conclusions might be drawn yet stronger, perhaps, than those already stated; and it would appear not only that our commerce and marine are intimately connected with our Navigation System, but that, as that system is

infringed,

* A return, made about two years after the passing of the Register Act, which is more accurate than any that had ever been made before, and which proved the quantity of our tonnage to be considerably more than had been supposed, states that, in the year 1787, the ships and tonnage of England and Scotland were as follows :

	Ships.	Tonnage.
England.....	8711	954,729
Scotland.....	1700	133,034

It should be observed, however, that the East-India ships then at sea are not included in the above tonnage.

infring'd, or maintained, they are to flourish or to decline.

We sometimes talk, nevertheless, very lightly on the claims of the Americans, and listen very stoically to those of some of the West Indians ; but we neither sufficiently weigh them in their nature and tendency, nor are we often sufficiently aware of the danger of compliance. Yet that danger even the slightest view of our West India trade will render obvious. The number of vessels employed in our commerce, twelve years ago, with that part of the world, as appears by the report of the committee of the Privy Council, in the year 1791, amounted to upwards of 740, containing 154,643 tons*. This is great in a commercial, but still greater in a political estimate. For the sailors so employed are of the
utmost

* This statement does not include the vessels employed between the remaining British Colonies, and the British Islands in the West-Indies, and which amount to 52, containing 4837 tons.

utmost importance to the marine strength of the nation ; and, while those engaged in distant voyages are not to be obtained for the purpose of our Navy, these are always at command, and can always be added, on emergency, to the naval force of the kingdom. Of such a trade, in proportion as the prosperity is great, the system on which it has advanced is wise. If you touch that system with a rude and incautious hand, you may shake the key-stone of the whole structure. If you tamper with that trade, and send it adrift, you may destroy in wantonness what is so necessary to your existence, and sacrifice to light and ruinous innovation, that very portion of British commerce, which, from the nature and bulkiness of the merchandize, is most productive of wealth, and of the employment of shipping and seamen, and most essential to the maintenance of our maritime superiority. It must be repeated, and with deep concern, that we often inconsiderately sacrifice to mercantile speculation, or partial and mistaken interests, the essential principles of Laws and Systems, under which we had flourished, and
which

which had been the object of applause and imitation at home and abroad*.

I use this strong language because I am apprehensive of change. Some of the West-India merchants, more than once, and that with every management and clamour, have laboured to accomplish their views of an unrestricted intercourse with America; and though their efforts failed, and their arguments were thought to be refuted, I have known the activity of zeal or imaginary interest carry so many points, and the attention and prudence which should watch over public affairs so often suspended, that I should scarcely be surprised at any result. On the occasion of the treaty of 1794 with the American States, we know they proceeded so far in conjunction with the Americans, as to obtain the important and mischievous concession, that American vessels, not exceeding 70 tons, should enjoy a free trade to the West Indian ports. Fortunately for us the Americans were dissatisfied with the limitation, but though they sus-

pended

The Navigation, Corn and Poor Laws, have all been altered without attention to the true spirit of them.

pended the ratification of the Article, (and they should in future be kept at their word) the fact is still the same, and still continues to speak a very forcible admonition. I am therefore apprehensive; and that apprehension, as it possibly may be useful to disclose it, I am not solicitous to conceal. They who take these affairs into their own hands are, of all others, perhaps the least fit to form a solid judgment on them; their pursuits and their attentions have not been previously pointed to such subjects; they are too apt to listen to those who have a measure to carry, or a prejudice to maintain; and, however conversant they may be in theory, and theoretic writings, which often mislead, they have not sufficient practical knowledge to comprehend the full meaning and probable consequences of what is proposed.

Not merely a
naval force,
but the whole
dependence
and utility of
colonies con-
nected with
the question.

I dwell much and anxiously⁺ in this question, on the connection of our Navigation Laws with the existence of our Navy. But, in truth, what I have already intimated, the subject involves not merely the maintenance of our Navy,
but

but the whole use, and advantage, and dependence of our colonies. Sir Josiah Child, speaking of our West-India Islands, maintains, that “ if they were not kept to the rules of the Act of Navigation, the consequence would be, that, in a few years, the benefit of them would be wholly lost to the nation.” Mr. Adam Smith frequently implies the same persuasion, and asserts unequivocally, “ that the same Act is the wisest of all the commercial regulations of England.” These conclusions, and this approbation, sanctioned by such names, cannot but be of great weight; and I do not hesitate to assert my own persuasion, not only that, if the admittance of American shipping into the West-India ports is to be allowed, those Islands would become dependent on the American States; and that, rather than surrender the carrying trade to the Islands, it would be incomparably better to renounce the Islands themselves.

Let it be remembered that Britain derives no benefit from her West-India colonies, except those accruing to her navigation, manufactures, and agriculture, by supplying their wants,

and by the monopoly of their carrying trade; and it is those advantages alone, procured and preserved by the Navigation System, which can countervail, in any respect, the enormous expence of protecting them. The same articles which they furnish, might be purchased at least twenty per cent. cheaper at other markets, and the same revenue would arise from them, if they came through the Dutch, the Danes, or the French. I see not, therefore, why we should make the sacrifices expected from us, either with respect to America, or the Islands: with respect to America, because there can be no doubt of her continuing to take from us more than she can pay for; and with respect to the Islands, because the monopoly which they enjoy of the British market, secures to them a better price than they could elsewhere obtain. There is no friendship in commerce. The Americans, particularly, had no object but commercial advantage in all their negotiations. Even before the era of their independence, they avoided taking from this country, as much as they could, those articles which were not absolutely necessary to them,

them, or which they could obtain at other markets with greater advantage*. And when we consider, besides, that our trade is infinitely more necessary to them than theirs to us; that by taking our commodities they are enabled to trade on British capital; and that our exports to them, at best, are much less than is generally supposed; we shall, I hope, feel yet more disinclined to yield to their avidity any principle of those laws which have been so universally regarded as the ground work of our commercial and naval superiority.

But I observe further mischief likely to flow from any suspension of our Navigation System. The Americans will naturally make all possible use of their admission into the West-India ports. Their merchants, probably, will not be more de-

The suspension of the Navigation Laws further mischievous-
1st. As it must promote a clandestine intercourse between America and the Islands.

E 2

licate

* I do not mean this invidiously. It is but what might be expected from any people in the same situation; and I make the observation merely to remind the reader, that commercial selfishness is not to be charged solely to the account of Great Britain.

licate than those of other nations. The emoluments of contraband trade will be added to the profits of legitimate commerce: and there can be little doubt but that a considerable portion of such foreign European manufactures, East-India goods, and other articles as shall be required by the Islands, and have been hitherto furnished by British vessels, will be clandestinely supplied by American bottoms; and that the officers of the customs will be found but a feeble check to so illicit and mischievous a trade.

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to supply
foreign mar-
kets with the
produce of
the Islands.

Under such circumstances they will become the carriers to the Islands of provision and lumber, and they will in return bring back cargoes of sugar, coffee, molasses and rum. The consequences will be felt in a two-fold manner by England. The price of the above mentioned articles will be raised on the British consumer; and America will be enabled possibly to dispute with us, and certainly to participate, the advantages of supplying, with such valuable commodities, the wants and demands of foreign markets.

But

But the subject merits further observation. On an average of three years, during which our Navigation Laws were suspended, or infringed, that is, of 1795, 1796, and 1797, American vessels, amounting to 1289, containing 139,911 tons, and navigated by 8702 men, entered the several ports of the British West-Indies, and 1231 American vessels, containing 128,924 tons, and 8440 men, cleared out from them. If, therefore, the opening of the ports of the Islands should be continued or renewed, it is clear that the navigation of this kingdom, and its dependencies, must experience a momentous loss: for it must lessen at least in proportion to the tonnage and number of men abovementioned to be employed, since so much will be taken from the carrying trade of this nation*, and the very

E S

loss

* The diminution will be considerably greater. The American trade with the Islands, if it should be permitted, will, it is probable, very much and very rapidly increase; and every additional vessel and man which may be, consequently, employed by America, may be estimated as a loss of so much to British trade.

loss of the freightage of such a number of vessels, would be an evil of great magnitude, and great mischief.

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transfer to
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the supply
trade of the
Islands.

In fact the Americans, so privileged, would be able to monopolize the whole, or the greater portion of the supply of our Islands. They would enjoy, whenever we were at war, all the advantages of peace insurance, peace wages, peace freight, and peace contingencies of every kind; and, at all times, they would be able to make perhaps a treble voyage*, in about half the time which a British vessel requires to make one full freightage to the West-Indies and back†. Under all these local and other advantages in favour of America, we assuredly could offer no effectual competition.

* One, for instance, from America to the Islands, another from the Islands to Europe, and a third from Europe back again to America.

† Our vessels in general go out with about one quarter freight, or in ballast, and make but one voyage in the year.

competition. We should, on the contrary, be destined to see the whole of the West-India trade snatched, in a short period, from our hands, and consequently the rapid increase of the American navy, and proportional decline of our own. The transfer of the trade would amount to a transfer of seamen; and the seamen so transferred, would soon learn to regard the country that owned the vessels in which they plied as their own, and be thus lost to England for ever.

I must now protest, and I wish to do so in the strongest manner, against a most unbecoming practice which has prevailed, and lately been extended, that of conducting the trade of this country under licenses granted by the Privy Council. The granting of those licenses has been considered as a mere matter of form, and the licenses themselves were to be obtained for about ten pounds. To all such proceedings, as it appears to me, there are invincible objections; and my wish is to prevent, particularly during peace, any suspension whatever of the Naviga-

Licenses from
the Privy
Council, &c.
considered.

tion Laws, and yet more such extreme abuse of them as prevailed in the West-Indies, through the licenses granted there by the governors for, all shipping, particularly Americans, to enter, and which practice became common for the sake of the emolument of persons in office.

Navigation
Laws not to
be sacrificed
by treaty
without the
previous con-
sideration of
parliament.

Above all, I wish that the most essential parts of the Navigation Laws should never be yielded by treaty, without previously referring the business to the consideration of parliament; for I cannot conceive, that to lay a treaty before parliament, when *concluded*, and when the mischief is done, is, in any respect, to submit it to their consideration; nor that it is constitutional to yield any thing, *contrary to the law of the land*, by a *commercial* treaty, without the knowledge and acquiescence of the legislature. I should not, however, have made this remark, if an instance had not occurred to justify it, in the 12th article of the commercial treaty with America, to which I have already alluded—Ministers seem, at that time, to have taken advantage of the apprehensions of the country, and of the

the

the necessity of union ; the people were likely to submit to any thing that was proposed ; and the Navigation Laws were completely suspended, as Magna Charta, which is not so essential to our existence as an independent nation, would possibly have been, under similar circumstances.

Before a measure of this kind, however, shall again take place, the question, I hope, will be candidly submitted to the consideration of parliament. But, if the licenses and suspensions of which I have complained, should be continued or renewed, it will be necessary to bring forward some inquiry respecting the state of our Navigation Laws, for the sake of protesting, not only against that measure, but against permitting American vessels, contrary to the whole tenor of our colonial system, to enter our West-India ports. Such an inquiry would probably produce a full discussion of the subject ; and I should offer and be able to establish at the bar of the house, by the testimony of several of the
most

most respectable merchants and others, the following propositions:

General recapitulation.

That the commercial policy of admitting goods, the produce of all countries, in any foreign vessels, or the supply of our colonies by foreign shipping, departs entirely from those principles under which our navigation has so much prospered.

That all deviation from those principles must ultimately prove injurious to our carrying trade, and to our commerce ; and that, should the permission given to American vessels, even of limited tonnage, to enter our West-India ports, be continued, a wide channel will be opened to the smuggler, to the injury of the fair trader, as well as of the revenue.

That such permission will enable the contraband dealer to introduce clandestinely into our Islands, in American shipping, a considerable portion of the European and East-India goods, hitherto supplied by Great Britain, and that the
officers

officers of the customs will be found but a feeble and insufficient check to that mischievous traffic.

That the allowing American vessels to trade to our Islands, under the pretence of supplying them with lumber and provisions more regularly, and at a cheaper rate, is fallacious; because America does not carry cheaper than Britain, and because the freight in British and American vessels has always been the same, and is, in fact, the principal object of that commerce on the part of the Americans.

That British merchants will not fit out ships to carry on the supply trade of the Islands, if they shall be liable to be interrupted by the *transient* ships of the American States, the supply by which is peculiarly fluctuating, and sometimes extravagant in respect to price, and is by no means so certain and steady as that which is carried by British vessels, regularly stationed on the trade.

That

That it is, therefore, the indisputable interest of the Islands, as well as of the Empire, that the trade, instead of being subjected to the irregular speculative mode practised by the Americans, should be carried on by British shipping, properly stationed in the Islands.

That if the entry of American ships be granted, our Islands will become entirely dependent on the American States.

That the Americans, though, in return for provisions and lumber, have sometimes taken molasses, rum, coffee, and a quantity of sugar, not exceeding one-third of the vessel's inward cargo, (a limitation disadvantageous to this country) have more frequently received money for their cargoes, which they carried (as under similar circumstances they will continue to do), to the French, Dutch, and Danish settlements, the produce of which they could purchase at least 20 per cent. cheaper than that of Jamaica.

That

That America has already gained an extraordinary portion of our carrying trade, and that on an average of three years, 1795, 1796 and 1797, no less than 1289 American vessels have entered inwards, in the several ports of the British West-Indies alone.

That the navigation of these kingdoms is lessened to the amount of the tonnage and men thus employed.

That if we renew the experiment which we made by the Act (founded on the Dutch Property Act), which has just expired, and by which the Navigation Laws were suspended for two years after the war, the complaints of our merchants will be justly renewed, our shipping and men, to be discharged on the return of peace, will remain without employment; the ship-building trade will be utterly discouraged; and the multitude of artizans connected with that most essential manufacture, be dispersed abroad in search of occupation and bread, or remain at home, idle, famished, and riotous, as on former

mer occasions, the greatest nuisance, instead of the greatest advantage of their country.

To these details I might easily add more of great importance and weight ; but enough, I hope, has been already said, to satisfy the public, that the Navigation Laws cannot be suspended or violated without much private mischief and public danger. I shall, therefore, only farther observe, that the arguments I have advanced, have issued from no enmity to Americans or to America, or to the individuals of any nation. My writings and efforts, for the last twenty years, in favour of the great palladium of our marine, have, indeed, excited against me in America, some asperity and ill-will ; and these pages may possibly renew the enmities which have so often attempted to arraign my intentions, and disprove my observations. If, however, I had been inclined to inveigh against the Americans, various circumstances and facts are within my knowledge, which would have enabled me to indulge such a spirit. But far from being disposed to
 avail

avail myself of occurrences not immediately connected with my subject*, I have sought and

* I have less ground than others for dissatisfaction respecting the American States, because I do not regret the independence, especially of the States North-East, West, and South-West of the Chesapeak, which produce little that we want; and among other reasons, because an Article, that would have proved highly mischievous to the Mother Country, had been introduced into our Colonial Law, viz. that Plantation built ships should be deemed British; by which means our Colonies became our most dangerous rivals in the manufacture which of all others we should have been most jealous. And it should be observed, that it began to interfere very much with the ship-building trade of this country; and that the numerous artificers employed in that trade, not only were more apt to emigrate to America than others, but all persons of that description, and the seamen employed, would have been out of our reach at the moment we should most want them.

I must add, that the attempt to introduce East-India built ships is perfectly unjustifiable, especially as our possessions in the East are not Plantations; and all the arguments

and am anxious only to maintain, in a manner however inadequate, the most valuable and indispensable code of my country ; and, satisfied with this motive, I shall feel as little inclined as I have hitherto been, to reply to the angry or fallacious answers of speculative and prejudiced opponents. Such former answers as I have read, I have read without conviction, and I did not think it incumbent on me to reply to arguments which, as I conceive, were intended only to embarrass or pervert the question. The same silence, as long as I possess for it the same grounds, I shall certainly preserve. It will be enough for me, if the publication of opinions, which a long experience, and a twenty years accumulation of proofs have only tended to confirm, should induce men to deliberate with caution on new treaties, which may sub-

vert,

ments offered in favour of admitting them to the British Register, tend only to shew that we should import the teak timber and other articles for constructing ships from the East-Indies.

vert, or at all impair, the established laws : and
I shall account my reward very high, if, by this
or by former writings, I shall be thought to
have contributed any thing to the progress of
British trade, and yet more to the maintenance of
the British Navy.

SHEFFIELD PLACE, *Feb.* 14, 1804.

THE END.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE general notice which the following Remarks have attracted, has induced the author to revise them. He has made a few corrections, and has enlarged upon some of the topics, for the purpose of explaining, more fully, his view of different parts of the subject.

A
PLAIN ANSWER,
&c. &c.

THE public has so much interest and concern in the real character of those who either are at present, or are at any time likely to be called to the management of the affairs of the nation, that every fair attempt to develop their character, or to appreciate duly their pretensions, is justly entitled to general approbation. But as every such endeavour is likely to answer a beneficial purpose, so every attempt to mislead upon this point has a hurtful and mischievous tendency. It is one of the evils of party, that it represents its adherents as eminent in every great and good quality, and its opponents as destitute of every thing that is meritorious. Ingenuity is employed on all sides to bend things and circumstances to suit a purpose, and the readers of polemical discussions will not approach

I agree with the Near Observer when he tells Mr. Addington that "*he cannot be his friend and his flatterer too ;*" but I fear, I shall very much disagree with him when I consider in which of these characters he appears. As he cannot flatter, so, he assures us, " he has nothing exaggerated, and set down nothing in malice ;" the present Ministers he represents as " faithful, able, vigorous, fortunate," and Mr. Addington as possessing " judgment, knowledge, firmness," (Gracious God !) " equanimity." This is surely enough in a writer who "*exaggerates nothing,*" who is " no flatterer," and who cannot even venture to promise Mr. Addington that what he says " will soothe his vanity." Mr. Pitt, Lord Grenville, and Mr. Windham, are stated to be the leaders of a faction which is " corrupt and perfidious"—" unprincipled and profligate ;" hard words ! and particularly when they flow from the pen of a writer, who "*sets down nothing in malice.*"

It is much to be wished, that he had given us some proof of the claim of the Administration to his high eulogium ; or the title of Mr. Addington to the rare qualities which he has ascribed to him ;
qualities,

qualities, the use and exercise of which appear so essential to our welfare, perhaps to our existence, at this awful crisis : but he has left to me the ungracious task of examining these pretensions, for I cannot admit the truth and justice of them upon mere assertion ; nor can I in conscience, like the *Near Observer*, first consider the expeditions against Egypt and Copenhagen as *hopeless*, when the object is to detract from the fame of Mr. Pitt, and admit that when they turned out fortunate the merit of their success should belong to Mr. Addington.

But if the panegyric of the Administration, and the praise of Mr. Addington, rest upon assertion alone, and if little or nothing appear to support them, except the assurances of an anonymous writer, that he is no flatterer, distinct grounds are brought forward, for the attack which is made upon the character of Mr. Pitt, Lord Grenville, and Mr. Windham. These grounds are,—*the time, the manner, and the occasion, of their quitting their official situations* ;—*the promise given and withdrawn, of “ constant, active, and zealous support ; ”*—*the circumstances of the negotiation for the return of Mr. Pitt into office ;*—*and the general conduct of these persons in Par-*
liament.

liament. These are points which it is necessary to examine.

In adverting to the circumstances of the resignation of the late Ministers, and the arrangements which ensued, for the formation of a new administration, I am unwilling to dwell more particularly upon the transaction, or upon the remarks of the Near Observer upon it, than is absolutely necessary to place the subject in its true light. The Public are principally interested in this proceeding, inasmuch as the characters of statesmen are affected by it. A curiosity to be acquainted with the details of every interesting political event, is perfectly natural; but there certainly exists no imperious necessity for the gratification of this curiosity in every instance, nor have the people any right to complain of a blameable concealment on the part of his Majesty's Ministers, merely because the progress and circumstances of a transaction involving in it the exercise of his Majesty's undoubted prerogative are not minutely detailed to them. This observation is rendered necessary by the manner in which the subject before us has been treated by the Near Observer, who makes it a principal charge against Mr. Pitt and his

his friends, that they quitted their posts without fully explaining to the people the causes of their resignation.

When it was announced that a change was about to take place in his Majesty's councils, and the public were thereby thrown into a state of "consternation" more justly than consistently described by our author, the desire of the public to be acquainted with the causes of this event was certainly very strong. Various rumours prevailed as to the causes of the resignation. As far as was consistent with dutiful respect to their Sovereign, the Ministers did not hesitate to acquaint the public with the motives which had induced them to relinquish their situations.—“ Feeling it,” they said, “ an incumbent duty upon them to propose a measure on the part of Government, which they thought of great public importance,—when they met with circumstances which rendered it impossible for them to propose it, as a measure of Government, they felt it equally inconsistent with their *duty* and their honour, any longer to remain a part of that Government.”

They

They at the same time explained to the public the general outline of the measure to which they alluded. Upon this topic it is quite unnecessary to enlarge; especially as there is reason to suppose that (as frequently happens upon similar occasions) the question, in its course, took a very different shape from that which it originally bore; and had a similar difference of opinion existed, with respect to any *other* question attended by the same circumstances, the result would, in all probability, have been exactly the same. Of the essential importance of the question itself, and of the nature and tendency of the circumstances attending its discussion, the Ministers were to judge for themselves. They considered that the line of conduct which they adopted, was equally conformable to their public duty, as it was consistent with their private feelings.

Considering this short explanation as furnishing a plain and intelligible reason for the resignation, I should feel it unnecessary to say more upon the subject, but for the extraordinary motives which the Near Observer has assigned for the conduct of Mr. Pitt and his friends upon the occasion, or rather which he thinks proper to
suppose

suppose to be the motives ascribed to them by the world at large. The character and conduct of the Ministers who resigned, from the earliest period of their political lives, and the nature of the charges usually brought against them by their most violent opponents, are equally inconsistent with the supposition of their having been influenced by "*despondency and apprehension.*" What? Is it probable that Ministers, who had seen Jacobin principles gaining daily strength in Britain, Ireland in open rebellion, the fleet in a state of mutiny, the bank supposed to be insolvent, the kingdom threatened with famine, a people murmuring against the load of taxes and the war by which they were occasioned, and the fairest prospects of success often disappointed by the weakness or desertion of our Allies? Is it probable that Ministers, whom these evils could not appal, should have yielded to feelings of despair, and begun to be apprehensive of our danger, at the moment when the malignant principles of Jacobinism had been almost eradicated from the country which gave them birth; when they had accomplished a measure which they considered as the best hope of the future tranquillity of Ireland; when our fleets were triumphing in every part of the world (and

at that instant preparing a dreadful stroke for a new foe); when public credit was completely restored, and the nation roused to the exertions which the state of Europe called for at their hands?

This representation of the state of the country at the beginning of 1801, is very different from that which has been exhibited by the *Near Observer*; and since, with what consistency I will presently enquire, he lays great stress upon the *period* at which the late Ministers quitted office, I will shortly examine the circumstances of that period.

He represents "the subjugation of the best half of the Continent as ratified at Luneville;" and the "rest of the Continent as France, Spain, Italy, Piedmont, Switzerland, the courses of the lower Rhine into the Ocean, the Seven United Provinces, and the Low Countries absorbed!" To the correctness of this statement, in point of fact, I have certainly nothing to object, however surprised I may be, that these topics should have been placed by our author in so prominent a light; that the zealous partizan of a Ministry, who had

had given their *sanction* to the subjugation of half of the Continent, and to the absorption of the remainder in the enormous power of France, should love to dwell upon these unfortunate events, and to adduce them as an instance of the *desperate* situation of the country under the late Administration. A state of things which the present Government—"successful,"—"fortunate,"—"vigorous,"—"prudent,"—had solemnly ratified or tacitly consented to !

. But as for the remainder of the statement of the Near Observer, I can neither assent to the correctness of his facts, or the justness of his conclusions.—What ground is there for saying, that the war had *now* grown unpopular and hopeless ? and to assert, that " the single disappointment received at Ferrol, caused more discontent and despondency than had arisen from all our mistakes and misfortunes at earlier periods of the war ?" To assertions like these, unsupported by any proofs, it is difficult to oppose any thing but general contradiction. It would be a most extravagant supposition to imagine, that the fortune of the war could have been materially affected by the failure or success

of this expedition. To the Journals of Parliament, however, I may refer my author for a denial of his position, that the war was more unpopular than at former periods. As far as we can judge of the national feelings by the public expression of them, it was certainly less unpopular in 1801 than in 1795, 1796, and 1797.

But the war, says our author, had also grown "hopeless." I have no hesitation in confessing, nor does the confession imply any thing derogatory from the honor of the country or the wisdom of its late Ministers, that at the conclusion of the Preliminary Treaty, and for some time before, the probability of our effecting the delivery of the Powers of Europe from the state of oppression to which they had been reduced by the enormous power of France, had become very slight indeed. The period had arrived, when we could no longer hope to obtain that object by the further prosecution of the war, and we were necessarily obliged to limit our views to the best mode of providing for our own separate security. The *Near Observer's* assertion, introduced without any apparent connection with the subject, "that the nature and character of the war had been early mistaken,

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mistaken, and that its principles and objects had repeatedly appeared to change," is *one* of those wilfull and perverse misrepresentations which he has borrowed from the " Old Opposition," and on which I deem it unnecessary long to dwell. I will observe, however, that the nature and character of the war was that of a contest carried on against the enormous ambition, the overgrown power, the revolutionary spirit, and the revolutionary means of France. The general object must always have been to obtain the best security which circumstances could point out against all the various dangers arising from these causes. The degree to which such security could be thought attainable, and the best mode of obtaining it, necessarily varied from time to time, according to the events of the war and the circumstances of Europe. The best and most satisfactory issue of the contest would, unquestionably, have been, not only to have confined the dominion of France within its former limits, but completely to have overthrown the revolutionary system and all its consequences. The next thing to be desired was, that its power should be sufficiently reduced, and the safety of this country insured by the maintenance of the independence and strength
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of the other nations of Europe. If both these pursuits became unattainable, it still remained for us to protect our own country, at least, from the dangers which we had in vain endeavoured to avert from the rest of Europe. To have directed our views to these several objects, as, on a just view of circumstances, one or other of them might seem attainable, argues no change whatever in principle; but was the policy which every man must adopt, who recollects, that whatever be the general object of any war, the particular mode of pursuing it must depend, from time to time, on the course of events, and on the situation of the enemy and of other powers.

How far “the capacity of the persons entrusted with the conduct of the war” can be affected by the history of the Treaty of El Arisch, is a subject which has been repeatedly discussed;* but if, indeed, the expedition prepared for

* On the 15th of December, 1799, the British Government having reason to believe, that proposals would be made for the evacuation of Egypt by the French troops, upon condition of their being suffered to return unmolested to France, sent instructions to Lord Keith not to consent

for the recovery of Egypt was incompetent to its object, if his Majesty's *late* Ministers have no claim to the merit of "that most happy and stupendous service," I would ask upon what are

to any such convention. The bad faith with which such engagements had been kept by the French Government, and the danger which would arise at that particular period, from the return to Europe of so large a force, appear to be the motives which governed the conduct of his Majesty's Ministers, in giving those orders. As soon as they learnt that, before the receipt of these orders, Sir Sidney Smith had concluded a Convention upon the terms of the return of the French troops to their own country, although without any stipulation to prevent their serving immediately in Europe, the British Government sent orders to the Admiral not to obstruct the execution of ~~this~~ treaty.

Before these second orders reached Lord Keith, he had, according to his instructions, notified his former orders to the French General, the consequence of which was, the immediate renewal of hostilities. What then is meant by the violation of the treaty of El-Arisch? the whole responsibility to which the late Ministers are subjected by this transaction, depends upon the *policy* of giving the orders of 15th of December, 1799. In discussing this question we must remember, that at this time the chief hope of the war rested upon the events of the Continental campaign, which, in the quarter that would in all probability have been principally affected by the return of the French troops, was terminated in favour of the enemy, by a hard fought battle, and which, at one period, was even considered as gained by our allies.

founded the pretensions of the present Administration to it? Is it that the principal battle which was fought in the campaign, and which may be said to have decided the fate of Egypt, took place upon the very day that Mr. Addington became the First Lord of the Treasury? or that Lord Hobart opened the dispatches addressed to Mr. Dundas, giving an account of that glorious event?

To support his opinion of the inadequacy of the Egyptian expedition, the Near Observer quotes the authority of a very gallant British officer. To this authority I will only say, that the opinion of those who have been victorious,—that the means put into their hands did not afford the probability of victory, is always to be received with much allowance. It is not improbable that the Ministers might have been acquainted with circumstances totally unknown to the officers of the army, which, in their judgment, would sufficiently counteract any disparity of force between us and our enemies. But what pretext has our author for his affectedly unwilling avowal, that no Minister could be sanguine enough to expect the success of the expedition, which was prepared by the late Government

vernment to assist our negotiations with the Northern Powers? I am as unwilling to enter into naval as into military details, but at least I may be permitted to say, that the circumstance of the object of the expedition being accomplished, with respect to one Power, at the very sight of the British fleet, and to another, by the operations of a *detachment* from it, are not very favourable to the opinion which our author thinks it "were unjust to dissemble."*

I wish

* It is said in the Cursory Remarks that "Lord Whitworth signed a Treaty of *Adjournment*, at the expence of some implied and virtual *admissions* which in happier times could never have been *extorted* from a British Cabinet." Let it be remembered, that by the *Preliminary Convention* of the 29th of August, 1800, it was stipulated, that his Danish Majesty should *suspend his convoys*, until the conclusion of a Definitive Treaty. If, therefore, there was any extortion in this transaction, it consisted in our obliging our adversary, as a preliminary, (*pendente lite*) to give up the object in dispute, until we should be enabled, with greater means in our hands of enforcing our demands, to treat with him for the final acquiescence in them. When it afterwards appeared that notwithstanding this, the King of Denmark had joined the other Northern Powers, in a treaty extremely injurious to our interests, and contrary to the ancient usages of Europe, his Majesty's *late* Ministers lost no time in preparing an expedition for the purpose of enforcing their just pretensions. *This expedition obtained*

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I wish I were not compelled to touch upon another subject upon which our author dwells—The lamented illness of a Sovereign who has uniformly lived in the affections of his people. I yield not to the Near Observer in every feeling of heartfelt affliction, which so universally prevailed on account of that calamity.

Aware of the delicacy of this topic, I cannot listen without indignation to the insinuation, that at such a moment his Majesty's late Ministers thought proper to retire from his service. They had laid their offices at his Majesty's feet, days and weeks previous to this most alarming and distressful event. But my observation, *which is not very distant*, has deceived me much, if Mr. Pitt, at the time of doing so, *did not make a distinct offer to retain his situation, until the war should be concluded, and the country relieved from its most pressing difficulties*, pro-

that victory by which "the rostral column of our naval enterprize had been crowned," and led to that Convention upon which the *present Ministers* rest so much of their claim to our applause. Whether by this treaty they obtained for the country all that we had a right to expect, is a question upon which great difference of opinion exists, but which it is here unnecessary to discuss.

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vided he could be assured that no attempt would be made in the mean time to prejudge the important question, the difference of opinion on which, had led to his resignation. Although this offer was not accepted, his resignation was nevertheless suspended, by the event which immediately followed, of his Majesty's unfortunate illness. Until his Majesty's recovery, he not only remained nominally in office, but continued to act during the whole of the period, as Minister, and retained as much as ever the chief direction of affairs.

These facts require no comment. The public will not hesitate to decide, whether there is the slightest ground for the insinuation of "apprehension and despondency," and whether the circumstances which I have mentioned are not a sufficient answer to all the misrepresentations respecting *the period* of the resignation.

It is unnecessary to state the circumstances which prevented the proposition to which I have alluded from being carried into effect; but such there were, and the new Ministers in consequence entered upon their offices soon after the happy recovery of his Majesty; which leads me to the

second topic to which I have proposed to advert, namely, "the promise, given and withdrawn, on the part of Mr. Pitt and Lord Grenville, of constant, zealous, and active support of the present Administration."

Mr. Pitt undoubtedly, when he retired from office, felt convinced that under the circumstances of the period his Majesty had selected for his advisers persons by whom it was probable that the Government of the country would be wisely and safely administered. He considered them, therefore, entitled to his support, and, as well as Lord Grenville, gave them his assurance of it. To give to any set of men a promise of constant support, *let their conduct be what it would*, is as inconsistent with every idea of public duty, as it certainly is with common sense or common honesty. Neither Mr. Pitt nor Lord Grenville ever gave, nor did Mr. Addington understand that he had received, such a promise. If, therefore, as the Near Observer so pompously *averts*, the assurance had been couched in the precise words, "constant, active, and zealous support," it would have needed no sophistry to give to the promise a limitation. But what is the real fact? The words

words which are quoted by our author were made use of by *Lord Grenville* in a speech,* in which he claimed for the new Administration the confidence of the country, as consisting of men who had constantly approved the principles upon which he and his colleagues had enjoyed the confidence, and received the support of the nation, and who had both publicly and privately professed their intention of continuing to act upon the same general system which had been adopted by their predecessors.

As such, his Lordship said they should have his "constant, active, and zealous support." With respect to Mr. Pitt, it is not very necessary to inquire what were the particular words in which he conveyed to his successors his assurance of support; but in this case, as in that of Lord Grenville, there was not only an implied, but an *express* limitation to the promise. And *Mr. Addington* could tell the *Near Observer*, that out of the *three points* which Mr. Pitt, upon this occasion, selected as essential conditions of his support, *two* are those upon which he has expressed his disapprobation of the measures of the present Government.

* 20th March, 1801.

Such was the nature of the assurances of support given by Mr. Pitt and Lord Grenville to the present Administration. Let me ask how far the subsequent conduct of these two Statesmen has subjected them to the heavy charge of a breach of faith brought against them by the author of the *Cursory Remarks*?

With respect to Lord Grenville, he looked upon the terms of the treaties by which the war had been concluded, the manner in which they were negotiated, and several other measures which took place at the same time, not only as a departure from the principles upon which he had offered his support—but as affording a proof of the incapacity of Ministers, sufficient to authorize and require a systematic opposition. This I consider as the public principle upon which he has acted, and which the *Near Observer* denies to exist with respect to any person who has opposed the present Government.

As Mr. Pitt has never commenced a systematic opposition to the present Ministers, the remarks of the *Near Observer* apply only to the circumstance of his having expressed his disapprobation of some of their proceedings, and
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perhaps of having also suggested to them measures which he thought essentially necessary to the safety and welfare of the country.

I shall not enter minutely here into a discussion of the merits of the different questions upon which he has differed in opinion with the Ministers. If I were to point out one principle which seems to have guided him throughout, it is the disapprobation of a want of system, and of a wavering, temporizing, indecisive conduct.

But the Near Observer is not content with censuring Mr. Pitt for having taken the liberty to speak his sentiments in Parliament—he accuses him of a breach of promise, because he did not attend in the House of Commons to give his assistance to the Government upon every question of importance. I leave our author to reconcile this accusation with his former expression of “officious support.” If Mr. Pitt had not been prevented by the circumstances of his health from attendance to parliamentary duties at the period alluded to, I should have asked the Near Observer whether he was quite sure that Mr. Pitt was not acting *kindly* towards Mr. Addington, in forbearing to deliver his opinion upon the

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the important points which were then under discussion?

With respect to the confirmation of the promise of support, which is stated to have been given "with some form and solemnity" upon her Majesty's birth-day, the ceremony took place only in the fertile imagination of the *Near Observer*. Mr. Addington had been distinctly and repeatedly informed, previous to the time,* of Mr. Pitt's disapprobation of his general views and statements of finance, and of his management in several points of our foreign relations.

Thus stands the question, with respect to the assurance of support given by Mr. Pitt and Lord Grenville:—but what is the case as to Mr. Addington? Had he made no express or implied engagement with respect to the system of government which he was to pursue? Had he not, by his uniform concurrence in the general measures of Mr. Pitt's administration, shewn his approbation of the fundamental principles upon

* The *Near Observer* asserts that by the influence of Lord Grenville Mr. Addington was deprived of Mr. Pitt's friendship, "notwithstanding every one of his measures has received his support and approbation."

which

which the latter had acted? Was it not this circumstance which formed his first title to the confidence of his Sovereign and of Parliament? And was it not the express ground on which, at the outset, he received the support of the former Government? If he has since appeared to lose sight of those principles; if in the short interval of peace, his statements of finance were fallacious, and his intended measures inadequate*; if his foreign policy has been destitute of system, of firmness, and of vigour,—to whom is a breach of engagement, or a disappointment of just expectation to be fairly imputed?

I come now to speak of a transaction, upon which I particularly request the attention of my readers. I know that I tread upon delicate ground, but in treading it I shall not deviate from the path of truth. Upon a question interesting in itself,

* Although Mr. Addington, in his statement of the 10th of December 1802, admitted the necessity of a peace establishment unusually large, yet, instead of determining upon measures, the object of which should be to bring the revenue up to the full extent of the establishment whatever it might be, he trusted for the accomplishment of that purpose, to an increased revenue calculated upon principles equally unprecedented and erroneous.

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upon which curiosity had been much excited, and upon which, from the nature of it, little could be publicly known, the "Near Observer" seems to have thought that confident and positive assertion could not fail to make an impression. No species of falsehood is so certain of passing current upon the world, as that which has some degree of truth (however slight) for its foundation; and the misrepresentation of this transaction, however gross, appears to be the misrepresentation of a person who had the means (though certainly little of the inclination) of stating its circumstances with correctness and precision.

It is very far from my intention to set down all the particulars which have come to my knowledge respecting this transaction, however well authenticated they may be. Indeed I should not have entered at all upon the subject, if it had not been for the purpose of correcting mistatement, and of refuting and exposing calumny. I confine myself therefore within the limits of the "Near Observer's" misrepresentations, premising only, that no farther circumstances with which I am acquainted, vary in any degree the general complexion of the transaction. If I have

have mistaken or misconceived any point, I call upon Mr. Addington, or any of his friends, to correct my error.

Towards the end of March, or at the beginning of April, upon the eve of war, after it was distinctly known to Mr. Addington that Mr. Pitt strongly disapproved of some of the leading measures of his Government, and after an overture had been made on the part of Mr. Addington, too foolish, I had almost said, too insulting to be noticed, a distinct proposition, (originating, not, as has been insinuated, with Lord Melville, but entirely with Mr. Addington himself,) was made to Mr. Pitt, the object of which ~~was~~ his return to the official situation he formerly held in the Administration; and, as I understand, the arrangement was to have taken place whenever the negotiation then pending with France should have been brought to a conclusion. It was also signified, that vacancies would be made for the purpose of admitting Lord Melville into the Cabinet, and some other of Mr. Pitt's friends into different official situations. To this proposition Mr. Pitt replied, that he would not enter upon the question of arrangements, *until he was distinctly informed by*

a message from the highest quarter, that his services were thought essential; that if so called upon, in spite of the precarious state of his health, he should not decline the offer of his best advice and assistance; that he was fully aware of the great and increasing difficulties of the country; and that he saw the necessity of a strong, vigorous, and efficient Government. That if called upon by his Majesty, he should feel it to be his duty to propose an Administration consisting principally of the members of the present and of the late Government; that in the general arrangement which he should submit for his Majesty's consideration, he should, if they assented, include the Lords Grenville and Spencer, but that he should press no person whatever upon his Majesty, only reserving to himself the power of declining the undertaking altogether, if he could not form such a government as would enable him, in his judgment, to conduct the affairs of the nation with a fair probability of success. No sine qua non was insisted upon, as the "Near Observer" alledges, with respect to the admission of Lord Grenville or of any other person into the Cabinet. All that Mr. Pitt required was, that he should be at liberty to submit to his Majesty whatever he thought best for his Majesty's

Majesty's service, unfettered by any previous condition, and he positively declined committing himself upon the question of particular arrangements until his Majesty's pleasure had been distinctly signified to him.

Such, I may venture to assert, was the substance and spirit of Mr. Pitt's conduct, through the whole of the transaction. What was that of Mr. Addington? In bringing forward the proposition of which I have spoken, he endeavoured to make it a preliminary, that Lord Grenville should not, in the first instance, be included in any arrangement whatever. On the grounds already stated, Mr. Pitt refused to listen to such an exclusion, or to any other particular stipulation previous to laying his ideas before his Majesty. How far, after knowing Mr. Pitt's determination upon this point, Mr. Addington, for a time, felt, or expressed, a disposition on his part to accede to it, I will not take upon me to assert; but it is, I believe, pretty certain, that after an interval of deliberation, and after consulting with his colleagues, he declared ultimately, that nothing could induce him to afford even the chance of admitting Lord Grenville into the Cabinet, and that this determination

tion would allow of no change. His Majesty of course was not advised to send to Mr. Pitt, and Mr. Addington's proposition fell to the ground.

If this be a correct statement of this transaction, (and if it be not, I again call upon Mr. Addington or any of his friends to contradict any part of it) I ask what ground is there for describing it as "*a negotiation set on foot by Mr. Pitt for his return to office?*" What pretence is there for calling it "*a scramble for place?*" What foundation for the base insinuation, that to the disappointment occasioned by the failure of this negotiation, not to fair and honest opinion upon public grounds, is to be imputed the disapprobation which Mr. Pitt has at any time shewn of any of the measures of the Government? Mr. Pitt was *invited*, (without any previous step taken on his part) to a negotiation, the professed object of which was, to place him at the head of the Government; instead of impatiently grasping at office, he declined the proposal, because it was coupled with conditions inconsistent with what he felt due to his public situation, and with his views of the public service. With respect to the motives for his subsequent conduct, I have

have sufficiently answered all unworthy insinuations on that head already, by mentioning a fact which will not be contradicted—that Mr. Addington knew of Mr. Pitt's decided disapprobation of some of his principal measures, before this overture was made.

Mr. Addington evidently wished for the assistance of Mr. Pitt to strengthen *his* government, and this desire encreased with the difficulty of his situation. It is equally evident, that Mr. Pitt had no inclination, (as indeed no man could expect that he would have) independent of any disapprobation of their general measures, of strong objection to any of the steps taken in the negotiation with France, or of any other cause, to take office merely as an *accession* to the present Administration. Amidst the difficulties with which we are surrounded, many persons may naturally wish, that Mr. Pitt had lent his assistance to the Government in any manner in which it would have been received ; because the insufficiency of the present Administration, in our critical state, is very generally felt, and because Mr. Pitt would have infused energy and vigour into their councils, and would have been a "tower of strength" to them at this perilous moment

moment. But surely it was for him to appreciate the talents and qualifications of those with whom he was to risk his character, and to consider upon what terms he could return to office, consistently with his own credit and with the public interest. None can question his right to determine upon this point for himself.

As it was not proposed, that this arrangement should have taken place till the negotiations with France had been brought to a conclusion, and as at the period of which I am speaking, the war appeared to be inevitable, it could not have been objected to the Lords Grenville and Spencer (as I have heard it objected to them during the late feverish and fretful peace) that their dispositions were too warlike. Indeed I never heard that the mention of the name of Lord *Spencer* had on any account excited the slightest dissatisfaction. It would indeed have been most extraordinary if it had—a nobleman of irreproachable and amiable character, and who had presided, in the last war, over one of the principal departments of the state with great ability and success. It will be curious to examine the ground of the rigid and severe proscription which was applied to Lord Grenville.

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His parliamentary conduct had been marked by strong animadversions upon the measures of his Majesty's Ministers,* and on the discussion of the treaty of peace appeared to have taken the shape of direct and unqualified opposition. He represented its terms as totally inadequate to our just pretensions—he even ventured to doubt the security of the peace, and the pacific mind with which the First Consul of France was supposed to have concluded it. It would be foreign to my purpose to discuss the correctness of these opinions; but at least I may be permitted to say now, that they rather shew the sagacity and penetration of Lord Grenville's mind than furnish any just ground for his exclusion altogether from office, and particularly since Ministers have made that extraordinary confession (extraordinary only as coupled with their conduct and professions during the interval) that “the period which had elapsed since the conclusion of the definitive treaty had been marked with one continued series of aggression, violence, and insult on the part of the French Government.†”

* Vide Woodfall's Parliamentary Debates, Nov. 3, 1801, and May 4, 1802.

† Vide Declaration on the breaking out of the war. Stockdale's Correspondence, 168.

It is certainly not my intention to enter into the comparative merits of the *projet* presented at Lisle and the Treaty of Amiens. Volumes may be written without settling a question which is now of little import in itself, and which is not to be decided alone by the advantages of the terms proposed by the *projet* or obtained by the Treaty, but by a comparison of those terms with the relative state and prospects of the British Empire and France at the different periods referred to, and by various other general considerations. But I cannot consider the representation made by the "Near Observer" of the state of things at either of these periods as in any degree correct. We were neither so reduced at Amiens, nor in so prosperous a state at Lisle as he would insinuate. I cannot agree that France was "mistress of Egypt" during our negotiation at Amiens; nor, if I did, could I consider it as a reason why we should have accepted less advantageous terms. Neither can the "confederation of Kings from the bosom of the north" be justly stated as placing us under a disadvantage in that negotiation, for that confederation may be considered as having been dissolved by the glorious victory at Copenhagen, obtained a very few days after the first overtures for peace were made.

made. As little can I admit that we were entitled to more favourable terms than those which we were willing to have accepted from France at Lisle, because (it is said) we treated "at the moment of one of her revolutions." The terms were offered previous to the revolution alluded to of the 4th September 1797. It was that revolution which broke off the negotiation. Instead of the powers of Europe "being ready to renew the war at our side," they appeared to have deserted us. The Treaty of Leoben* had been signed, and that of Campo Formio was about to be concluded. The stoppage of the Bank had created consternation and embarrassment, and the mutiny in the fleet had spread around us general despondency. The circumstances and situation of the country were totally different at the periods of our negotiations at Lisle and at Amiens, and that difference was certainly not in favour of the former period. I cannot see therefore why the "basis of the Treaty of Amiens," is to be considered as necessarily "traced at Lisle," or why "the *projet* of Lord Grenville was a circle out of which his suc-

* The Treaty of Leoben was signed 18th April, that of Campo Formio 17th Oct. 1797. State Papers, Vol. VI.

cessors could not tread." These assertions are made perhaps in some degree to shew the diplomatic skill displayed by us at Amiens, but chiefly to prove the inconsistency of Lord Grenville in offering the projet and in disapproving the Treaty. From this charge he exculpated himself very ably and successfully on the discussion of that Treaty itself.*

But Lord Grenville is accused of using harsh and uncivil language; and the "Near Observer" tells us that "*absurd, incapable*, and grosser epithets, were liberally applied to his Majesty's Councils and Ministers, and by no Member of either House more frequently than by his Lordship." The use of expressions more harsh and severe than the occasion justifies, on which they are applied, is always objectionable. It often manifests ill humour, and always bad taste. But it is an evil which carries its own remedy along with it; for it tends more to defeat than to forward the purpose it is meant to promote. I wish the "Near Observer" had profited by his own admonition, and that he had refrained from the still harsher and more calumnious epithets which

* Vide Woodfall's Debates 3d Nov. 1801.

he has thought fit so profusely to bestow on the conduct of Mr. Pitt, Lord Grenville, Mr. Windham, and Mr. Canning. He would tell me, perhaps, that he has only paid Lord Grenville in his own coin; but he has paid him with most usurious interest, and with base metal. But are harsh expressions in debate quite unpardonable? Has Mr. Addington always been so unforgiving and implacable? A Right Reverend Prelate, who has never concealed his indignation at the peace, or his opinion of the Ministers themselves, was the first whom they promoted. It cannot have escaped Mr. Addington's observation, how nicely, while he was *fishing for office*, (to use his own expression) Mr. Tierney regulated his forbearance by his chance, and how correctly they varied together. I could point out occasions on which hope seemed to have deserted him, and on which, in debate, he expressed himself towards Mr. Addington in the harsh and unqualified language of despair; yet he is not only forgiven, but rewarded. What shall I say of another *new convert*? If the terms *absurd* and *incapable* are thought very opprobrious and quite unpardonable, how has Mr. Addington been induced to forgive the still harsher and coarser language

language of Mr. Sheridan ?* Is it that Lord Grenville is supposed to desire an office which is already occupied, and that Mr. Sheridan *says* he will not take one? or is it that a different rule is to be applied to Lord Grenville, and to every other person, and that the public are to be deprived of the official services of an able Statesman, from the effect of private pique and personal resentment ?

For never can I endure to hear the surmise so industriously propagated, and assigned also by the "Near Observer" as the cause of his Lordship's exclusion,—that "there is an obstacle, if appearances are not very deceitful, to the admission of Lord Grenville into office even *higher* than Mr. Addington's reluctance." Indecent insinuation! Whom, I ask, whose talents, whose

* "When an election committee is formed, the watchword is to shorten the business *by knocking out the brains*, that is, by striking from the committee list the names of those gentlemen who may happen to understand the subject. In this sense Mr. Pitt now has knocked out the brains of the Administration." Vide Mr. Sheridan's speech in the House of Commons, 16th Feb. 1801. Vide, also, Mr. Sheridan's speech 14th May 1802, in which he represents the present Administration as the *sitting part* of the former. Woodfall.

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acquirements, whose services would be advantageous to the state, has the high Personage referred to ever proscribed? Away then with these shifts and pretences, the refuge of every Minister who shrinks from his own responsibility. It is most unseemly, as well as unconstitutional, to give out that any thing ungracious can arise in the quarter alluded to; in a quarter to which, from experience, the people of this country look up for every thing which is becoming, just, and honourable; for every thing which is best calculated to promote their interest, their happiness, and their prosperity.

Of Mr. Windham, who, it is well known, objected strenuously to the Treaty of Amiens; it is said, that since he quitted his office, "he has made the important confession that he had always disapproved the projet offered by Lord Grenville to the French Directory." It is then asked, "is it consistent to conceal opinions as a Minister and promulge them at the head of a party?" Certainly Mr. Windham can seldom be reproached for *concealing opinions*; and I had always believed that his disapproval of the attempt to treat at Lisle had been very generally known, even while he was in the cabinet: but I have

have no difficulty in saying, that it may be justifiable to conceal opinions as a Minister, which circumstances may compel him afterwards to avow publicly when that restraint is removed, which is imposed upon a Member of the Administration differing from his colleagues. It cannot be supposed that the Members of the Cabinet Council are unanimous upon every question which is there decided, and it would be unfit that each Member should retire because he may disapprove of the particular measure which is adopted. If he really thinks that by continuing a Member of the Cabinet, under such circumstances, he is more likely to forward his general, public purposes, than by quitting it, every consideration of conscience and of honour calls upon him to remain, and it is his duty to resign his opinion upon the particular question on which he differs.

But the great inconsistency of Mr. Windham, and of those whom the *Moniteur* had termed the "War Faction," is considered as arising out of their objection to the peace, and their hesitation to assent to the necessity of the renewal of the war, when they found that it had been declared. "When we see the Right Hon. Gentleman (Mr. Windham) in full fruition of his vow, and
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the kingdom replunged into war, shall we find him consistent then ?" What pretence is there for representing the renewal of the war as the fruition of Mr. Windham's vow ? He urged as one of his reasons for objecting to the peace, that its consequences would put us out of the condition to renew the war, which he thought would soon be necessary. He disapproved of dismantling our fleet and disbanding our army, because he thought much time would not elapse before it would be necessary to equip the one, and recruit the other. There is no inconsistency in endeavouring to avoid peace when we had large naval and military establishments on foot, and to hesitate in declaring war when those establishments had been let down. As little inconsistency is there in objecting to the immediate ground of war, and in thinking that many occasions had been passed over, on which Ministers had been called upon to take up arms. I give no opinion here upon these views of the subject : they may be erroneous ; but they are not what they are brought forward to prove ; they are not inconsistent.

I should have thought that even those who objected most to the opinions of Mr. Windham,

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would

have no difficulty in saying, that it may be justifiable to conceal opinions as a Minister, which circumstances may compel him afterwards to avow publicly when that restraint is removed, which is imposed upon a Member of the Administration differing from his colleagues. It cannot be supposed that the Members of the Cabinet Council are unanimous upon every question which is there decided, and it would be unfit that each Member should retire because he may disapprove of the particular measure which is adopted. If he really thinks that by continuing a Member of the Cabinet, under such circumstances, he is more likely to forward his general, public purposes, than by quitting it, every consideration of conscience and of honour calls upon him to remain, and it is his duty to resign his opinion upon the particular question on which he differs.

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would

would have seen in him much to admire. His courage and his manliness; his acquirements as a scholar; his manners as a gentleman; the acuteness and ingenuity of his mind, and the general disinterestedness of his conduct.— A “Near Observer” might easily have discovered that an aversion to every thing that is mean is a striking feature of his character. Yet he is represented as a “man of place, a man of time, a man of circumstances, a man of convenience.” He is accused of that which, at such a moment as the present, would be little short of treason. He is charged with impeding and obstructing the national defence. “Shall we behold him,” it is asked, “arraying the forces, ballotting the militia, calling out the volunteers?” Yes, I reply; we shall behold him *among the foremost in arraying the forces*, not certainly in ballotting the militia, or in calling out the volunteers; but why? because he does not consider those to be the *most efficient modes* of arraying the forces: but in objecting to the measures brought forward by the Government, he proposed others which appeared to him better calculated to attain the object which was in view; and he did not leave a shadow of pretext for the foul deduction of the “Near Observer.” Are we really
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to think that Mr. Windham did not wish to put forth the best energies of the state for our safety and preservation, because he did not approve the plan of the Ministers; or because, perhaps, he might not think that they knew very well how to carry their own plan into execution?

Much as I admire the character of Mr. Windham, I shall never point to prudence and discretion as his most prominent virtues. Inferior men who possess more of these qualities, will often obtain great advantages over him. Upon all important political questions, he forms his own judgment without any reference to that of others; and when he most disagrees in the sentiments of the public, his chivalrous nature seems to impose it as an obligation upon him the more to press and urge his own opposite opinions. Those opinions also he appears to me often to push to extremes. I know not whether the conduct of Mr. Windham be calculated to render him generally popular, but I know that no man deserves more credit than himself for an honest and conscientious discharge of public duty.

Mr. Canning is, complimented most deservedly for "rare talents" and "private worth," but he is accused, not with a very good grace, by the author of the "Cursory Remarks," and without any proof, with libelling those whom he opposes. He is also represented as having become the "instrument of other persons." Mr. Canning appears to have felt very strongly the incapacity of the present Ministers, and particularly of Mr. Addington; to have considered them as acting upon no system whatever, and, as well as Lord Grenville, to have founded his opposition upon this ground; and to have taken an active and a consistent part in endeavouring to enforce this opinion. No pretence whatever is stated for representing him as acting under the controul of Lord Grenville, which would not equally have applied to any other eminent Statesman, in whose opinions he had coincided, and who had taken the same line as himself. It is a novel doctrine which pervades the whole of the "Cursory Remarks," that if a person supports the Administration, he is supposed to act from the purest and most disinterested motives; but if he opposes their measures, he is looked upon as

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the instrument of others, or as acting under the influence of the meanest and the basest passions.

The insinuation that Mr. Canning's conduct gives the opposition which Mr. Pitt may have made, or may hereafter make, to any measure of Mr. Addington, "the suspicion of system, preconcert, and policy," is unworthy of a serious answer. What would our author have said of *preconcert* and *system*, if, instead of taking different lines, Mr. Pitt and Mr. Canning had adopted the same regular course of opposition?

This is not the first time that such insinuations have been thrown out, and the friends of Mr. Addington (or at least those who professed to be so) never ceased attempting to excite in his mind doubts of the sincerity of Mr. Pitt; Mr. Canning is asked whether he did not feel that (by his conduct) he was throwing "suspicions over that sincerity?" a point upon which he is said to have "exculpated Mr. Pitt with great eloquence, but imperfect success." Mr. Canning attempted no exculpation whatever from such a charge. He treated it as reflecting disgrace upon

upon those alone who could harbour such a sentiment, and rejected the base imputation with scorn and contempt. It was not enough for these pretended friends of Mr. Addington, that Mr. Pitt disapproved of many parts of Mr. Canning's parliamentary conduct. It appeared as if nothing short of creating an irreconcilable enmity between these men could content them of Mr. Pitt's sincerity. This proof they have certainly in vain endeavoured to obtain ; but, perhaps, I may be allowed to doubt whether they wished very anxiously for conviction upon this point, for they were at this period labouring to impress upon Mr. Addington's mind, how much his own importance was lessened, and his Administration weakened by his connection with Mr. Pitt. They were continually representing, that instead of affording aid and assistance to Mr. Addington, Mr. Pitt's supposed weight and influence lessened his importance, and placed him in a degraded and humiliating situation. The Old Opposition lost no opportunity, for reasons which are obvious, of enforcing these doctrines both in and out of Parliament. Some of them, indeed, seemed to have signified in a manner sufficiently intelligible, that the separation of Mr. Pitt from Mr. Addington

Addington was, in the first instance, the price of their support. How far at length Mr. Addington has suffered his mind to be worked upon, by the united efforts of both parties, I leave to the public to judge and determine.

With whatever calumnies, however, the "Near Observer" has assailed the character of Lord Grenville, Mr. Windham, and Mr. Canning, his most poisoned arrows are reserved for Mr. Pitt, whose parliamentary conduct is the subject of his most pointed and severe reprehension. His support is deemed "officious," and his opposition "perfidious and unprincipled." His public actions are ascribed to no honourable or public motive whatever. Envy and mortification at the *success* of Mr. Addington, are supposed at a very early period to have influenced him. "The public," says our author, "could not be brought implicitly to believe either that the acceptance of the new Ministers itself, or at any rate the credit and popularity which they had acquired by the late happy events (the peace, &c.) were altogether agreeable to Mr. Pitt." Mr. Pitt has been often condemned for recommending to the present Ministers the acceptance of office, but it was left for the ingenuity of the "Near Observer" to discover

discover that he was displeased, because they followed his advice. He has also been censured for approving the Treaty of Amiens, even with all the qualifications which accompanied that approval;* but little, I believe, did he ever dream of being told that the *credit* and *popularity* which Ministers had acquired by that work, was a subject so unpleasant to him that it influenced his public conduct *against* them. But "that this Minister (Mr. Addington) should dare to appear worthy of his Majesty's confidence, and carry on his affairs with ability and success, appeared (to Mr. Pitt and his friends) an unpardonable injury and a crime." It is surely hardly necessary for me to examine whether Mr. Pitt possesses so malignant a heart, as to be incapable of enduring the intolerable success of those Ministers whom he had recommended to his Majesty's councils. I am stopped in the outset of such an examination; the very ground-work is wanting. Where, I ask, is this enviable success? Shall I be told by the Near Observer, that it is to be found in the Treaty of Amiens?

Of this Treaty he observes, with singular regard to his promise of "exaggerating nothing," that

* Vide Woodfall's Debates 3d Nov. 1801.

Ministers had “obtained a peace for the country *beyond the hopes of the wisest and the most sanguine of their well wishers*, and they had arrived at it by the gate of victory and success.” Is this then the success which so mortified Mr. Pitt ? which appeared in his eyes and in that of his friends to be, on account of its merit, “an unpardonable injury and a crime ?” If the present Ministers really arrived at peace by the gate of victory and success, it was a gate which their predecessors had thrown open for them. It was Mr. Pitt’s victory and success at Copenhagen and in Egypt. But whatever we may think of the policy or impolicy of the late peace (a question which it would be foreign to my subject to enter upon here) can it fairly be looked upon as so very glorious and brilliant as the “Near Observer” would represent ? And does he not very much overrate the value of the peace, for the purpose of exalting the merit of Mr. Addington, and for the sake of giving a shadow of plausibility to the insinuation, that Mr. Pitt’s conduct is to be imputed to the envy which this great and successful measure had created ? But let us hear the “Near Observer” himself upon this subject. “If,” says he, “there really exists an individual *who ever did confide in the duration of the late peace*, I

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would counsel him to keep his own secrets. It would be in vain to charge his drivelling as a crime upon other men. He is *Nature's* fool, and not Mr. Addington's." So that the peace *which was beyond the hopes of the wisest and most sanguine of Mr. Addington's well wishers*, the success of which so galled, vexed, and irritated Mr. Pitt as to incline him to hostility to the Minister, was a peace in the *duration* of which none but a driveller ever confided ! It would be a waste of time to comment farther upon this point.

Mr. Addington has been very generally accused of deceiving the public, with respect to the probable continuance of the late peace. From this accusation the "Near Observer" attempts, I think not very successfully, to exculpate him by a reference to his Majesty's speech of the 3d Nov. 1802. "*In my intercourse with foreign powers I have been actuated by a sincere desire for the maintenance of peace. It is nevertheless impossible for me to lose sight of that established and wise system of policy by which the interests of other states are connected with our own ; and I cannot therefore be indifferent to any material change in their relative condition and strength. My conduct will invariably be regulated by a due consideration*

deration of the actual situation of Europe, and by a watchful solicitude for the permanent welfare of my people."

This paragraph, says the Near Observer, is a "complete answer" to all those paltry and futile accusations which have been preferred against Ministers, for having concealed the true state of affairs during the discussion of the bill for the relief of the Prince of Wales; upon which occasion they are accused of having given a false representation of the probabilities of the permanence of the peace." The sentence here quoted from his Majesty's Speech is a master-piece, in the style of indefinite and convenient composition, to be construed hereafter as circumstances and occasions may require; but never can I admit that it is a complete answer, or *any answer at all*, to the accusation brought against Mr. Addington,—that during the continuance of the peace he kept up the idea of its duration with professions of too sanguine a nature. Not that I mean to insinuate that he intended to deceive the public: I believe that he possesses great facility in deceiving himself, and that the deception is always on the side of his wishes. But surely it cannot be forgotten that, until the

breaking out of the war, the peace was always represented by the Ministers as being as likely to last as any which had preceded it; the erroneous calculations of the Budget of the 10th of December were stated to be made *upon the supposition of peace*, and on the discussion of the message respecting the relief of his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, Mr. Addington represented the country as being "*at profound peace.*" But, says the *Near Observer*, the "interval between this message and the 8th of March (the period at which we were called upon to arm, on account of the *pretended* hostile armaments in the ports of France and Holland) is but *three weeks!* The whole complaint and charge are therefore confined to three weeks." If it were so, the charge would not be less strong. The nearer the period is brought to the moment of hostility, the less ground could there have been for talking of "*profound peace;*" we also since know, by their own declaration, that Ministers considered the insult and aggression of France as uninterrupted from the treaty of peace to the breaking out of the war.

From the conclusion of the peace to the present time, few occasions have presented themselves,

selves, for coupling together the name of Addington and *success*. Envy could therefore no longer be looked upon as influencing Mr. Pitt's actions; but it was necessary, in pursuit of the object of our author, to consider them as governed by some other motive equally base and dishonourable. Disappointment, occasioned by the failure of *his negotiation* (as it has been called), is now supposed to have actuated his conduct: how far the transaction alluded to can strictly be called a negotiation; and if so, how far it was *his negotiation*, has been already shewn.

There are very few points in which I wish to agree with the Near Observer. But (though I am convinced that it never could have been a motive of action with Mr. Pitt) I wish I could think with our author that Mr. Pitt felt a sufficient desire to return to his official situation, to have occasioned any thing like the disappointment which is supposed to have taken place, because Mr. Addington's proposition was abandoned; I should in that case feel that the hope of seeing him again in office was, in some degree, strengthened; and I should think that there was a better chance for the safety and prosperity of the country.

I fear

I fear that the fact is otherwise, from every thing I can learn respecting this transaction. Mr. Pitt is said to have disliked the mention of the subject, *without the express permission and approbation of the King*, and (whether from his then doubtful health, or any other cause) to have felt himself relieved when the proceeding was brought to a conclusion. I know not what there was at the period to which I refer, to have rendered it very desirable for a person who had held the situation of Prime Minister with success for seventeen years, and in the most arduous times that this nation ever experienced, "*to accept a seat in the Cabinet,*" upon the terms dictated by the present Ministers. I believe the conclusion of this transaction occasioned as little sore disappointment to Mr. Pitt, as the public measures of Ministers had excited mortification on account of their success. But though Mr. Pitt felt no disappointment at the issue of the transaction, I will not pretend to assert that he may not have felt a disappointment of a very different nature, from the manner in which he found it conducted. It will not be difficult to suggest motives for Mr. Pitt's conduct *more probable* than mortification at the failure of any personal views, or than the influence of the

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the arguments which Lord Grenville is supposed (most falsely) to have urged, to induce him (as it is called) "to abandon the Ministry."

A person not blinded, like the Near Observer, by his aversion to the late Ministers, may perhaps think that it is *just possible* that some difference of opinion with Mr. Addington upon the general subject of finance; that some difference as to the management of our foreign affairs; that some difference in particular as to the conduct of Ministers in the negotiation with France, may have operated on Mr. Pitt's mind. He may have thought the representation of our financial resources on the 10th of December last was not *perfectly* correct; though afterwards he may have thought it of little avail to revise or to comment upon a statement made in contemplation of peace, when war had been declared. He may have thought that the necessary steps to conciliate foreign powers had been omitted, that alliances had been neglected. He may have thought that though the hostile spirit of the First Consul of France was sufficiently manifest, yet that from the Treaty of Amiens to the breaking out of the war, that
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spirit had been met in a manner more likely to *invite* and encourage, than to counteract and resist it. He may have communicated these opinions, or at least some of them, to his Majesty's Ministers, and he may have found that they were either rejected as ill founded, or unattended to altogether.

If Mr. Pitt disapproved strongly of the conduct of the Ministers on many points, and particularly of their errors and blunders in the negotiation with France; if, at the same time, he felt that the censure proposed to be passed upon them by Mr. Patten's motion* in the House of Commons, was more severe than the occasion required; if he thought that at such a moment particularly it was repugnant to the interests of the nation to countenance a measure, the object of which was to force the Ministers from his Majesty's councils; if he felt that it was the duty of Parliament to devote its whole time and attention to the pressing call for national defence, rather than to the inculcation of Ministers; what line of conduct could he have taken upon that question, but that which has been so

* Vide Woodfall's Debates 3d June.

unjustly condemned ? Whether as much attention has been paid to the important point to which he would have directed the sole attention of Parliament, as our situation required ; whether the degree of security (whatever it may be) which we enjoy, be not to be ascribed to the spirit of the people itself, rather than to any system by which the Ministers have directed that spirit, I will not here inquire : every body will agree that the subject was worthy of immediate, attentive, and serious consideration, and the nation would have been well satisfied if the Ministers had proposed, and the Parliament had adopted, measures better digested, and better suited to the exigency of the moment, than any which were brought forward. Mr. Pitt's uniform object during the remainder of the session was to encourage and support every measure which tended to give strength and vigour to the country ; and whenever this task was neglected by the Ministers, to do all that depended upon him to supply their omissions.

Upon the particular motion brought forward by Mr. Patten, other courses were suggested at the time, as those which it would have been more
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becoming in Mr. Pitt to have pursued ; but the objection to all of them is, that they begin by asking of him a complete sacrifice of opinion. If “ popularity ” had been his object, it did not require his sagacity to discover that he could not attain that end by forbearing to deliver his opinion. A conscientious feeling of duty to his King and Country could alone determine him to withhold any judgment upon the question ; but no party views whatever could possibly enter into such a decision. Mr. Patten’s friends, confident that he could not approve the irresolute and inconsistent measures which Ministers had adopted in their whole intercourse with France, and particularly in the late negotiation, and strongly urging the fatal effects to the empire, of the want of system and of firmness displayed on that occasion, contended that he should have given a direct vote of censure ; while the Ministers, convinced that they had excited a feeling of resentment against the First Consul of France, incompatible with all fair and just investigation of their own conduct, called loudly for examination and decision. They were not deceived in their expectations ; all other considerations, their own errors and inconsistencies, were lost in the contemplation

temptation of the insolence, ambition, and perfidy of France.* They obtained the favourable decision of a great majority, rather the effect of inflamed passion than of calm reason; they obtained it (perhaps in the way most agreeable to themselves) without any examination of the measures which had led to the rupture with France.

From this period all deference for the opinion of Mr. Pitt on the part of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, is looked upon as "a weakness," the only one "the *Near Observer* has discovered in his character." Mr. Pitt's opposition is represented as the most "aggressive and unrelenting" which could have been exercised; and we are asked, "what possible asperity; malevolence, and rancour of attack, could he (Mr. Addington) have experienced, which he did not sustain from the party of his predeces-

* In this debate Mr. T. Grenville delivered a most able speech, in which he examined very fully and very critically the different proceedings of the Government with respect to France; and he condemned very severely the inconsistency of those proceedings. The Ministers suffered the attack to pass not only without an answer, but almost without an observation.

sors, who were pledged to give him their zealous, constant, and active support?"

I recollect but two important questions which were discussed in Parliament subsequently to this period, in which Mr. Pitt took any very active part; and I should have thought, that the utmost exaggeration of calumny could not have described his conduct upon these occasions, as "rancorous and malevolent:" the one relating to the mode of raising the supplies, (particularly the Income Tax Bill) and the other, the general subject of the defence of the nation. Upon the latter point the Near Observer is silent, perhaps thinking it dangerous to his cause to touch upon this ground, to remind the public of the suggestions of Mr. Pitt, or of the manner in which those suggestions have been carried into effect by his Majesty's Ministers; and doubting perhaps whether Mr. Pitt's interference upon this occasion, came under the head of "officious support," or "unrelenting opposition." Upon the other point he enters at large, and, as usual, he sounds his censure (as I shall shew) upon mistatement.

Mr. Pitt's parliamentary conduct is represented.

sented, as “calculated, in a peculiar manner, to embarrass the administration of the finances,” * and this charge is supported by an assertion

* The Near Observer has the following note in proof of this assertion. “So early as the 25th of February, Lord Grenville had disputed Lord Auckland’s statement of the finances, asserting that instead of a surplus of *nine millions* in the revenue, there was a deficit of *four*. On the 26th of July, however, the whole of the *six millions and a half surplus of the consolidated fund*, were voted for the supplies of the year, upon the motion of Mr. Addington, and in the presence of Mr. Pitt, who made no objection to the statement of the Chancellor of the Exchequer; nor has any motion been made by Mr. Gregor, who had given notice. If these gentlemen are acting properly at present, as I do not deny, how will they justify their previous conduct?” Nonsensical confusion! Our author supposes the surplus calculated by Lord Auckland, the deficit asserted by Lord Grenville, and the sum voted by Mr. Addington, to refer to *the same thing*. Whereas the first is, a calculated surplus of revenue, after payment of the interest of the national debt; the second, the supposed deficit of revenue after paying interest of debt, civil list, and all our establishments, calculated upon peace; and the third is the estimated surplus of the consolidated fund, at a subsequent period after the payment of the interest of the debt and civil list, but without any reference to our establishment. Mr. Pitt and Mr. Gregor were of opinion, that Mr. Addington’s statements of the 10th of December were erroneous, and I have never heard it

tion that he “ raised a cry, that the faith of Government was violated by including the stockholder in the Income Tax, with every other species of proprietor.” Is this, on the part of the Near Observer, ignorance and mistake, or is it wilful misrepresentation? It never was asserted that the faith of Government was violated by including the stockholder in the Income Tax *with every other person*: what Mr. Pitt contended for most forcibly was, that *the stockholder should pay EQUALLY with every other proprietor whatever*; whereas, as the plan was originally introduced by Mr. Addington, it was proposed that his income, as well as that of the landholder, should be taxed (in cases of income of small amount) at a *higher rate* than certain incomes of the same amount, derived from other sources. “ I am compelled, as a Near Observer, to remark upon this oc-

it attempted to be proved that these statements were accurate. I have heard it, indeed, gravely asserted, that although many erroneous articles were introduced into the account of the consolidated fund, yet, that other items were as improperly omitted;—that one of these blunders most happily balanced the other; and that therefore, though the account was falsely made up, the *result* of the whole was *perfectly correct*!!!!

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cession, that the arguments of Mr. Pitt did not appear to have so much weight as his authority, in *obtaining exemptions* for the indolent capital of the stockholder, while every other species of annual income is liable to the just exigency of the state." Here is an insinuation, that Mr. Pitt obtained for the stockholder some favourable exemption, which was denied to other proprietors; whereas he contended (as I have said) that the income of stockholders should be liable to the just exigency of the state, in the same degree as all other incomes; that if exemptions from the tax were granted to small incomes derived from trade, or from any other source, it was not only an injustice, but a *breach of faith* also, to deny the same exemptions to the stockholder, which would be, in fact, *to tax him higher than those to whom the exemptions were granted.*

If any person still doubts the force of Mr. Pitt's objection, let him look into the Loan Act of the last or of any former year, he will there find a clause by which the faith of Parliament is pledged, not to tax the dividends of the public creditor. Surely I am not putting a harsh construction upon this engagement, when I say that at least it is stipulated by this enactment that in-

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comes arising from those dividends (even if the exigency of the state requires a tax upon *all income*, and this description of income is included with the rest) shall not be taxed in a higher proportion than other species of income: to have taxed them higher, then, would evidently have been a *breach of national faith*, yet such would have been the effect, though certainly unintentional, if Mr. Addington's suggestion had been adopted.*

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* The total misconception of the Near Observer upon this point, he has himself elucidated by the following note. "No person can be plainly absurd enough to contend that an hundred pounds in a man's pocket is not equally contributable whether he has received them from his steward or his stock-broker. The only question is, whether it be a breach of faith to take the tax without expence and inconvenience at the Bank, instead of running after the public creditor when he has carried his dividends to his closet? This cry, however, of Mr. Pitt, has cost us one million and a quarter from the annual resources of the war." Mr. Pitt stated his opinion distinctly, that the sum received from the steward, the stock-broker, or from any other source, *should be equally contributable*. It was Mr. Addington who proposed the *inequality* against the steward and stock broker in favour of other classes. The *breach of faith* was never represented as depending upon the circumstance of whether the stock-holder's contribution was paid at the bank or at his house, (a misrepresentation most indus-

The day after* the debate upon this question, the Chancellor of the Exchequer was *weak* enough (as the Near Observer thinks it) to give way upon this point, and he consented to *put the stockholder upon the same footing with respect to the tax as every other proprietor.*

It is painful for me to recollect with how ill a grace he yielded upon this occasion. After stating a few flimsy pretexts for so sudden a change of opinion, (the principal of which was that the *yeomanry* of the country had *expected* the tax to be laid in the manner which Mr. Pitt proposed) he solemnly declared that none of Mr. Pitt's arguments had induced him to make this concession. He surely might have spared himself this useless attempt to treat that reasoning as futile, which he had upon so many occasions considered as convincing and irresistible. Did he think that he could persuade the Members of the House of Commons that Mr. Pitt's opinion was well founded, but that the arguments by which

industriously propagated by the friends of the Ministers) but upon his being required to pay *a larger proportion* upon his income than other individuals.

* Vide Woodfall's Debates 13th and 14th July 1803.

it was enforced were weak, inapplicable, and unavailing? This was trying the credulity of his friends a little too severely, who were upon this occasion entitled to his favour, if not to his respect. He should have gratefully remembered the vote they had given; he should have considered that they were about to take as short a turn as himself; that they had lifted their voice *in favour* of the question on one day, and were willing to *declare against it* without a murmur on the next. To refuse them any ground for either one vote or the other, was not treating so much pliancy and obedience with all the fostering kindness which it so highly deserved at the hands of a Minister.* Mr. Pitt, whose conduct on this occasion is represented as full of “asperity, rancour, and malevolence;” whose arguments, even at the moment of yielding, Mr. Addington thought fit to slight and to decry, received this reluctant and peevish concession, with no other comment than, that he rejoiced that the improvement in this measure which he had sug-

* One hundred and fifty Members of Parliament voted against Mr. Pitt’s proposal on 13th July; and on the 14th resigned their opinions without giving a single reason for the change.

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gested had been made, and that he would not canvass the grounds upon which it had been adopted.

As the line which Mr. Pitt took upon this question seems to be the ground upon which the charge is founded, of "rancour and malevolence," it must be permitted to me to say that he had taken great pains to apprise Mr Addington, through the channel of some of his intimate friends, of the view which he had taken of this question, several weeks before it was proposed in Parliament, in the hope that Mr. Addington might have been induced to make the alterations which were suggested without any public discussion; and Mr. Pitt only brought forward his objection when he found his remonstrance, in the shape I have mentioned, totally disregarded.

It is unnecessary to ask, whether this proceeding be a proof of ill-will towards Mr. Addington; or whether, when an attempt was made to depreciate his arguments, in the manner I have described, his conduct evinced any thing of rancour? It is likely that this attempt excited in Mr. Pitt's mind a feeling which partook more

of compassion than of anger ; he felt, probably, no disposition to take advantage of a powerful weapon which a weaker adversary had placed in his hand.*

Our author sums up his remarks upon Mr Pitt's proceedings respecting the financial operations of the Government, in a manner for which, I confess, I was not prepared ; but the secret motives of those who affect to act upon principles of purity, justice, and impartiality, are often betrayed by their own incongruities and contradictions. Who is there who has read the pamphlet on which I am commenting, who has not been struck with astonishment when he arrived

* It may fairly be doubted whether, in its effects, the public have derived all the benefit from Mr. Pitt's interference in this measure which it was intended to produce. Mr. Addington had conceded once, and on that account he seemed determined to concede no more. Mr. Pitt was not allowed to improve the measure by any further suggestions, and it was sent forth to the public in the state of *perfection* in which it now appears. If it be still resolved not to adopt any improvement which originates with Mr. Pitt, it is to be hoped that the Ministers themselves will, in the course of the present session, propose such alterations as will at least render the measure intelligible to those who are to *pay*, and practicable to those who are to *act*.

at the following sentence ? “ Nothing, I confess, would give me more satisfaction, in this extreme difficulty, and most arduous crisis of our state, than to hear Mr. Pitt firmly and zealously giving his support to the King’s Servants. His financial skill, his commanding eloquence, and his still great influence in the country, would be a tower of strength to his Majesty’s Government. The public would be well satisfied, I have no reason to doubt, if the Right Hon. Gentleman would accept a seat in the Cabinet.” What ! Mr. Pitt, the rancorous and malevolent ; Mr. Pitt, whose conduct is “ unprincipled, perfidious, corrupt, and profligate ;” Mr. Pitt, who deserted his Majesty’s Government, from “ apprehension and despondency ;” Mr. Pitt, who possesses nothing but “ the mere gift of eloquence ?” and would it really give the Near Observer and the public satisfaction, and, on account of our difficulties too, to see such a man in the Cabinet ? What gross inconsistencies will a malevolent mind sometimes discover in endeavouring to give the appearance of candour to its representations, plausibility to its insinuations, and the character of truth to the efforts of its malignity !

Totally

Totally destitute of foundation as the attacks are upon the character of that great and disinterested Statesman, at whom they are chiefly levelled, there is scarcely more ground for the high praise so lavishly heaped upon the Ministers ; they are represented as “ faithful, able, vigorous, and fortunate ;” to their *fidelity* I cordially recede, but I can accompany the Near Observer no further in panegyric. The Peace of Amiens, their great work, was a “ peace of experiment ;” at least, so it was represented to be, by those who made it, as soon as they discovered that it was fast verging towards its end. It may have been (and, I think, was) right, under all the circumstances, to try the experiment at the time ; but it has failed, and the Ministers must be contented, not to rank it among their successful measures. I see nothing from the peace to the breaking out of the war, which can be fairly called able, vigorous, or fortunate ; if I look to more recent events, I see less to justify this encomium. I cannot discern any extraordinary merit in the management either of our foreign or domestic concerns. The loss of *Hanover*, in spite of appearances, may have been attended with no remissness, no procrastination on the part of the Ministers ; it may have been unavoid-

unavoidable, and it may have been impossible, (though a circumstance deeply to be lamented) to have brought away any part of the army of that country; it *may* have been fit to have discharged the transports taken up for that purpose, while the force was still well disposed and entire. It may have been excusable to have disbelieved all the information respecting the Irish insurrection, *to have been warned, and yet to have been taken by surprise.* It might have been politic to have temporized with Holland, it may be still right to temporize with Spain. All these things may possibly be justifiable, but they do not place themselves obviously and naturally, among the records of good fortune or of wisdom. They require much explanation, and some will probably be granted in this Session of Parliament. What shall I say of the conduct of Ministers towards those persons who so nobly stood forth as volunteers for the defence of the nation? I cannot even invent a justification; they were by turns caressed and discountenanced, invited and rejected, but (thank God!) they could not be dispirited. Among the many compliments paid to the Ministers, we are told that "the men are not visible in the acts of their authority," but here they were never out of sight. Acts
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and amended acts were passed ; the influence of Secretaries of State and Secretaries at War was brought forward to expound the statutes ; letter after letter was written, and weeks elapsed in explaining explanations ; at length the opinion of the crown lawyers was resorted to by the Ministers, for the construction of the acts which they had themselves so recently proposed ; and that opinion convinced them and the public how much at variance had been their intentions and their enactments. The volunteers were at last told, not in the most complimentary way, and as a sort of excuse for all the shifting and changing which had taken place, that “ the difficulties which had occurred had arisen in a great measure from a zeal and alacrity on the part of the people, which had exceeded even *the hopes* and expectations of the Government.”* Never was so plain and simple a measure so confused in the execution ; but never can I believe that *Bonaparte* will subdue that spirit which so much tampering and trifling could neither damp nor dishearten.†

* Vide Mr. Yorke's letter to the Lords Lieutenant, 28th of September, 1803.

† As exemptions both from the militia and army of reserve, appear to be given to the volunteers by the late acts,

I cannot see then, I confess, in these measures, the fruits of the great and rare qualities ascribed to the Ministers. If, however, the Near Observer had contented himself with passing a few fulsome panegyrics upon Mr. Addington, if he had been satisfied with extolling his "firmness," his "fortitude," his "vigour," and his "success," the present Minister would not have been the first who had been compli-

acts, *contrary to the intentions of Ministers*, and as the established force is thereby weakened, would it not be expedient to pass a law for rendering the volunteer force more efficient than it is at present, by insuring that it should be kept complete in its members, regular in its attendance and exercise, and provided with adequate and constant means of military instruction ?

I will not enter into the question of, whether volunteers, having once enrolled themselves, are compellable by law to a continuance of service, or whether they have the power of resigning. It appears, that different opinions prevail among great and eminent lawyers upon this subject. The clauses in the Acts of Parliament, relating to volunteer service, are certainly not clear upon the point; and in doubtful law, lawyers frequently resort to their wishes to decide the question. However efficient the present volunteer force may be, and I think is, for the sudden emergency in which it originated, if it is to be considered as permanent, it must be placed upon a very different footing from that on which it now rests.

mented for those qualifications in which he was most deficient ; and I should have left him in full enjoyment of those harmless congratulations ; neither would the mere inconsistencies of the Near Observer have prompted me to have taken up my pen. To represent the expeditions to Egypt and to Copenhagen as “ hopeless,” when speaking of the *late* Administration, and to consider them as glorious and triumphant, when he has appropriated them to the *present* : to tell us that the peace was “ beyond the hope of the wisest and the most sanguine of the well-wishers of Ministers ;” and to treat every man as “ a fool” who ever confided in its *duration* : to accuse Mr. Pitt of being “ perfidious,” “ corrupt,” “ unprincipled,” “ profligate,” “ malevolent,” “ rancorous,” as guilty of the basest treachery, — as possessing nothing but “ the mere gift of eloquence,” and to represent “ his abilities as calculated to sustain the essential interests of the empire,” and to wish “ that he had a seat in the Cabinet :” to censure him for *supporting* the Ministers, which he calls “ officious,” and for *opposing* them, which he deems “ factious :” to call loudly for “ *unanimity*,” while he is himself throwing the apple of discord : these, surely, are gross inconsistencies ; they are, indeed, so glaring,

glaring, that I should have felt it unnecessary to have pointed them out. But when I observe that good-will towards Mr. Addington, is not so powerful an incentive with this writer as rancour and hatred towards others; when I see him inconsistent to serve the worst purposes; when I detect him mistating facts, misrepresenting opinions, and deducing from his own misrepresentations, conclusions which are injurious to the reputation of the ablest and most upright men in the country; men to whom the nation looks up in this hour of peril as its best hope;—and lastly, when I see these calumnies countenanced by those who ought (if not from higher considerations) from the mere regard to decency and truth, to have suppressed them; I confess I feel that I am discharging a public duty, in endeavouring (however inadequately) to expose the baseness and malignity of this attack, and in vindicating from foul aspersion some of the most illustrious characters in the nation.

Here I should most willingly have closed these remarks, if some other considerations had not been forced upon me by the “Near Observer,” upon which, however, I shall touch very slightly.—The war, we are told, is that which “no policy,

no human prudence, no moderation, no forbearance could avert." I could have desired not to have been challenged upon this point; and I wish I could cordially agree in every part of this opinion; but I never can contemplate the conduct of the Government during the peace, and particularly during the negotiation which preceded the rupture, without deep and heartfelt sorrow; because I never can look at that conduct without thinking it *at least possible* that a firm, fixed, and invariable system might have preserved our honour and avoided the present contest. I cannot dignify with the character of "forbearance" and "moderation" what appears to me to be more correctly described as ill-timed concession, and submission; and when I find that credit is taken for "firmness and conciliation," I must examine how these dispositions have been employed. The application of them may be the effect of weakness, as well as of virtue. If we have been conciliating where we ought to have been firm, and firm where we ought to have been conciliating, it is in vain indeed to claim merit for the exercise of those qualities.—Was it conciliation which persuaded us to let down our force during the period of "aggression, violence, and insult," on the part
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of the French Government? Was it conciliation which induced us to cede our conquests to France, while justice was denied to British subjects? Was it conciliation which led us tamely to remonstrate against the introduction of the French military-commercial commissioners into this country, instead of transporting those "accredited spies," with indignation, from our shores? Was it firmness which dictated the order for the retention of the Cape of Good Hope when a French army had invaded Switzerland? Was it conciliation which prompted us to countermand those orders and give it up to the Dutch, when, in spite of treaty and of repeated remonstrance, a French army kept possession of Holland itself? * Do not let it be said any more, that the Dutch themselves desired us not to interfere; the very request proved their

* The order for the retention of the Cape of Good Hope was sent out by Lord Hobart's letter of 7th of October, 1802. On 29th of October, 5th of November, and 12th of November following, Mr. Liston represented that the French troops, to the amount of above ten thousand, remained in Holland, contrary to treaty. Without any satisfaction being given upon this point, orders were sent out for the restitution of the Cape to the Dutch on 16th of November. Vide Official Correspondence. Stockdale.

abject

abject submission to France; it should have been taken as a warning to us (at least while French dominion lasted) to have kept it for ourselves.

But who can doubt the anxious desire of the Ministers to preserve the peace? Nobody can doubt it: their wish was as ardent and sincere, as the means which they took to accomplish it, were certain of proving destructive to their own object. Let me draw an illustration from private life. How constantly does it happen that the man who will endure the most to avoid a duel, is, from that very disposition, in the end obliged to fight? He concedes till he is ashamed of concession, he tolerates insult after insult,* he finds his character fast sinking in the world, his conscience at length reproaches him with *too much submission*, and he draws his sword upon the first unfounded or inadequate pretence.†

Without entering into the merits of the Peace of Amiens, it was not difficult to perceive, at a very early period, that it could only be preserved by a *firm, manly, and uniform* system. We

* "One continued series of insult," &c. Vide Declaration.

† Vide Message of 8th March 1803. Woodfall, vol. ii.
should

should not, in the first instance, have entered into stipulations respecting the future state and government of the island of Malta, without the full authority and consent of those powers upon whom the execution of those stipulations depended; but, in every point of view, we should have adjusted the final settlement of that island, the only difficult point the negotiation presented, *with our conquests in our hands*. We should have insisted that the restitution of those conquests should have been accompanied on the part of France with pacific dispositions and pacific measures. In no case should our conduct have been *submissive*. If we had manifested this determination at the beginning, and acted upon it throughout; if we had adopted that system of *vigilance, precaution and firmness*, coupled with adequate and constant preparation so strenuously recommended by Mr. Pitt, and upon which, even in the discussion of the preliminaries of peace, he represented our security to depend—If we had steadily adhered to the deliberate and solemn pledge afterwards recorded in the address of Parliament on the Definitive Treaty, and on the ground of which pledge alone, Ministers knew that Mr. Pitt

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was induced to concur in that address *—*who* is there who can say, the war *might* not have been avoided ?†

It is possible, however, that no policy could have prevented the war ; that no human prudence could have counteracted the insolence and injustice, conciliated the hostile mind, or checked the insatiable ambition of the First Consul of France. If that be true, at least the line I have suggested would have rendered the justice of our cause manifest and apparent to all Europe : whereas, if I am rightly informed, (and

* “ We entertain, at the same time, a perfect confidence, that his Majesty will not fail to employ that vigilance and attention which the present situation of Europe demands ; and above all, that his Majesty will be uniformly *determined and prepared* to defend, against every encroachment, the great sources of the wealth, commerce, and naval powers of the empire.”—*Address upon the Definitive Treaty, May 13, 1802.*

† *M. Talleyrand* told a gentleman who was at Paris at the period of the present rupture, and upon whose veracity I can rely, that the *First Consul* had said to him, “ *If Mr. Pitt had been the Minister of England, we should have maintained the peace ; not (added he) that I think him more peaceably inclined than his successor, but, at least, I should have understood him, whereas I never could discover what the present Minister was about.*”

it is a point upon which I hope I am mistaken) *the whole Continent looks upon the case as against us.* We are falsely considered as having repented of the Treaty of Amiens, and as having sought an opportunity of annulling it. We have so contrived, that we hold out the appearance of retaining Malta, contrary to the express conditions of our treaty. This is stated as the occasion of the war, and plausibly at least we are represented as having been guilty of a violation of national faith.

When a good cause requires much explanation, it is seldom unjust to impute that circumstance to culpable neglect and mismanagement; but mismanagement on our part is no vindication of repeated insult on the part of France. It is no justification of aggression that the party aggrieved is too much disposed to submit. Whatever therefore may be my opinion of the mismanagement of Ministers, I have no hesitation in declaring my full conviction in the justice of our cause; nay, the very principle at length publicly avowed by France,—that this nation has no concern whatever in her aggrandizement on the Continent, must be, whenever acted upon, incompatible with a state of peace.

The "Near Observer" asks if these are times "to govern phrases or to frame sentences?" Nobody will accuse him of governing phrases, either in praise or in censure. Whether his work exhibits any thing of the easy or natural expression of honest feeling, or the formal adjustment of sentences, framed and laboured to serve a purpose, I will not enquire. It is to the tendency, not to the style and composition of his work that I apply myself; but if this be not a time to govern phrases, sure I am that it is not a time to withhold opinions. If in proportion as danger approaches, we are to be silent as to the best means of counteracting it, we lose one of the great advantages of a free government.

I would obstruct none of the measures of the Administration; but in pointing out the past, I would endeavour to warn against the commission of future errors. I would recommend to those necessary attentions and exertions, in which we have been most deficient. I would exhort to those energies on which, I think, depends, in this hour of danger, the salvation of the state.

The nation, we are told, "governs itself under the present Ministers, and for them." That
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the nation governs itself in a great measure is but too true ; that it governs itself *for* the Ministers is a position which I do not comprehend. Differing as I do with the "Near Observer" as to their rare merits, I am ready to admit that some of them possess eminent talents ; and certainly I have no desire to brand any of them as "perfidious, corrupt, unprincipled, or profligate." I believe they deserve those stigmatizing epithets as little as these persons to whom the "Near Observer" has thought fit to apply them. But, collectively, I do not think they possess sufficient ability to direct successfully the complicated affairs of the nation ; and unless recently they have much changed their opinion of their own powers, or think the circumstances of the nation have become less difficult and embarrassing, there is scarcely one of them, I believe, who does not agree with me in this opinion. For some of those Ministers I entertain a very high consideration ; and of the private character of Mr. Addington in many respects I think well. But truth compels me to add that, as a public man, he has disappointed the expectations which were formed of him, and has not proved himself qualified for the arduous duties he has to fulfil. The habits of his life have led him to the consideration of subjects

totally different from those which now occupy, or rather harass, his mind. In the Speaker's chair he had great merit, but *complaisance*, and *management*, did much, and often assumed the appearance of higher qualifications; the difficulty of the present day is neither to be managed nor compromised, it is to be met alone by vigour, firmness, and decision; qualities in which he is peculiarly deficient. Considering his means and resources, and the state and circumstances of the nation, never did any man appear to me to stand in a situation of such tremendous responsibility.

It is one of the first duties arising out of that responsibility, to represent things and persons in a true and faithful light in that quarter in which much must necessarily be learnt from such representation. No man is more courteous than Mr. Addington; no man takes so much pains to recommend himself universally. We cannot suppose that he has been deficient in every dutiful attention (so justly due from all) in the quarter alluded to. It is to be hoped that in recommending himself, in advancing his own pretensions, he has been careful not to depreciate those of others; but it is alarming and unaccountable to see the great talents and experience

rience of the country excluded from a share in its Executive Government, in this hour of general anxiety.

It has been recommended as the policy of weak states to sow dissensions among its enemies, as the best hope of security. I cannot suppose that at such a moment as the present, Mr. Addington acts upon this system with respect to the different political parties in the country ; but if those who govern are not looked up to with confidence, it will very probably follow, that our ablest statesmen will take different lines, and we shall be deprived of the full use and benefit of the great talents to be found in the nation. In a difficult crisis all should lend their best assistance ; but men will doubt the success even of well digested and efficient measures in unskilful hands ; they will be backward in offering suggestions, if they find their plans marred or confused in the execution.

Our author tells us that, " under the present Ministers, we must fight for all that is dear and sacred to humanity. By their side we shall conquer or lie down." I hope we are not reduced to that predicament, but if we are, *Brisons will not lie down.* Under abler and more
 expe-

experienced leaders our task might be easier, and our sufferings less severe ; but the question we have to consider is of a higher nature than even the confidence in one man, or the distrust of another. Every thing is at stake. *Libertas et omnia nostra in dubio.* It is a question between the fullest enjoyments, and the bitterest miseries of human life—between the proudest glory and the most abject humiliation.

If ever this nation was involved in a contest which ought to call forth all its energy and enthusiasm, it is that in which we are now engaged. We are threatened with destruction by the haughty insolence of an invading foe, by him who most unfortunately for the happiness of the world, possesses greater means of annoyance than for centuries past have been concentrated in the hands of any one man. But our safety depends upon ourselves—our exertions are called for by every just and honourable sentiment ; they are animated by the bright example of a beloved King, who will “ share our dangers in the defence of our constitution, our religion, our laws, and independence.”

A free state will ever be considered as an offending neighbour, to a despotic Government :
and

and we are looked upon by the Chief Consul of France, as guilty of every species of offence and provocation. The influence of liberty in our happy land, has enabled us to counteract disparity of numbers; we have put forth the energies of freemen, and we have been for centuries past the successful rivals of France. We have held out the example of a constitution which she envies but cannot imitate. Of the nations of Europe we have alone dared firmly to resist the fatal progress of French principles. These are among our crimes. Let us look at the character of him whom revolutionary means have placed on the summit of power, and ask ourselves whether we shall be forgiven?—No—If the threatened attempt should be made, and it were possible to suppose that we could fail in the struggle, no words which I can use would convey an idea of the wretchedness of our lot. In vain should we look for the extent of our sufferings, even to those unhappy countries which having been lulled by fair promises into imaginary security, have afterwards been desolated by the fury of revolutionary armies. If we fail, neither let us flatter ourselves with the hope, nor harbour the desire, of mercy. If we fail, we shall be considered less as the captives of conquest, than the victims of revenge;—but that

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we shall be triumphant I have the firmest conviction, because I have witnessed that gallant spirit which has pervaded the country; because I know that Britons will readily risk their lives for the preservation of those inestimable blessings which their ancestors have so nobly bled to obtain; because I believe that there are few among us who would not prefer honourable death to ignominious existence; and because I am sure that if we are actuated by these sentiments, though possibly from a desperate attempt of the enemy, and from the incapacity of our Rulers, England may suffer, yet *France cannot succeed*.

23d Nov. 1803.

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A
PLAIN REPLY
TO THE PAMPHLET
CALLING ITSELF
A PLAIN ANSWER
BEING
A MORE FAIR STATE OF THE QUESTION
BETWEEN
THE LATE AND THE PRESENT
MINISTERS.

• *Suum cuique.*

Give every Man his due.

Old Prov.

No species of falsehood is so certain of passing current upon the world, as that which has some degree of truth (however slight) for its foundation: and the misrepresentation of this transaction, however gross, appears to be the misrepresentation of a person, who had the means (though certainly little of the inclination,) of stating its circumstances, with correctness and precision. *Plain Answer*, p. 23.

L O N D O N :

PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR;

AND SOLD BY HATCHARD, PICCADILLY; EGERTON, WHITE-
HALL; AND RICHARDSON, ROYAL EXCHANGE.

1804.

PLAIN REPLY, &c.

THE public attention has of late been forcibly engaged by the publication of two pamphlets, each of them professing to review, with impartiality, the present state of parties in this kingdom; and more particularly the situation in which the late and present ministers appear to stand towards each other. If we only considered the interest which every man must necessarily feel in the government under which he lives, and by which he is protected; we must not wonder that the nation should receive, with great eagerness, every detail of particulars, bearing in any degree the appearance of authenticity, respecting the individual members by which it is administered. But there are circumstances of a most peculiar nature, which combine to render every particle of information upon that subject, most extraordinarily interest-

ing at this moment. The present times are eventful beyond all comparison. The contest in which we are engaged is infinitely more important than any which has ever occurred, at least since the civilization of Europe, under the mild spirit of Christianity, has prescribed limits generally received to the miseries of war, and the spirit of conquest. There are also circumstances of a private nature, which might serve most powerfully to excite curiosity. The change of ministers which took place somewhat less than three years ago, has hitherto remained, to a certain degree, involved in mystery. It was perfectly a new thing, that men, who went out of office, and, as it appeared, not entirely with their own good-will, should agree, and unreservedly profess to support their successors. When afterwards that support was withdrawn at various times, and under various, and even discordant pretences, by the different members of the old administration; when it was also known, that overtures had been made for the return into office of that individual of them, in whose abilities the nation had been used most particularly to confide, and that he had refused to accede to what appeared to be the wishes of the great body of the people, as well as of his own most intimate friends and former associates; it cannot but be supposed, that much anxiety
would

would be felt on all sides, to ascertain the causes and progress of events, at once so singular and important.

This is what was professed to be done by the respective authors of the two pamphlets above referred to: by one of them, indeed, more particularly as a volunteer, and as seeking, in the first instance, to convey material information: by the other, rather as pressed into the service, and only coming forward to correct what he assumed to be misrepresentation and calumny. Both these gentlemen profess to speak from something like authority; but this is not true in an equal degree of both. For it is most certain, and it is now admitted even by Mr. Pitt's friends, that Mr. Addington not only never saw the "Curfory Remarks," before they came out, not only never had an intimation of their being written, but that, for a long time after their publication, he was entirely at a loss in his conjectures respecting the author.* On the other hand,

* It is necessary here to take notice of the impudent calumnies which have been propagated, for the purpose of making the world believe, that Mr. Addington countenanced this attack upon Mr. Pitt. It has been confidently asserted in the first place, that seven hundred copies (the very number was mentioned) had been circulated under Treasury franks. This

hand, it is notorious, and even acknowledged, that the " Plain Answer," was not only written by a near friend, or rather (for, I believe, it is in some degree a joint production) by near friends of Mr. Pitt, but was actually revised by him.

is (and is now known to be) an absolute falsehood, without the slightest foundation. If any thing did take place of the sort, now again asserted by this gentleman, I will venture to say it could only be as to one or two copies sent to very particular friends. Beat out of this, the same libeller (Mr. William Cobbett) has gone on to say, that Mr. Hiley Addington, accompanied by his nephew, " repeatedly called at Hatchard's shop, and inquired how the pamphlet sold."—Now, after all this particularity of statement, will it be believed that this also is a direct falsehood? Hatchard will testify that no such enquiries were ever made! Of course, it is hardly necessary after this, to take notice of the reasoning of the Anti-Jacobin Reviewer for December, who has (after a miserable sneer, utterly unworthy of gentlemen who profess to watch over the public taste,) argued upon another false fact; for, after the best inquiry I have been able to make, I understand that the writer in question is not in the pay of the treasury.

May I not now ask, if it be not unworthy of the authors of the " Plain Answer" not only to countenance these reports, but even to argue upon them. See p. 2 and 3, and p. 71. These gentlemen must have had the means of knowing better. Observe too the guarded assertions, or rather insinuations, of Mr. Charles Ward, in the pamphlet above referred to.

Sent out as it was into the world, for the avowed purpose of detecting and exposing falsehood, the public had a right to expect from it the most clear, nay, and the most fair, statement. What then shall be said, if we find the account (as upon examination I think it will be found) to be not only as to several points wholly vague and unsatisfactory, but in others actually at variance with itself?

It is true, indeed, that between the "Near Observer," and the "More Accurate Observer," there are not many facts in dispute. The difference, I conceive, will lie principally in the colouring which is given to every transaction; in the manner in which the picture is charged on the one side and on the other, and the different lights in which the same objects are viewed by the respective parties.

This is not to be wondered at; for the two pamphlets manifestly appear to be written with directly opposite sentiments. The first (as it was said, and appears extremely probable) was dictated by motives of personal animosity, against Mr. Pitt.* The other is the production of men, decidedly connected with that gentleman, and professing to be his friends. Of course, it was

* See Cobbett's Register.

not likely that they should often agree, even in the representation of facts, where those facts were essentially material to the question.

The intention of the present sheets is, from the facts advanced, or rather the admissions made by both parties, with such correctives, as the author's personal knowledge and observation can furnish, to extract a more true state of the case, than has yet been presented to the public. If more attention is paid to the correction of the misstatements contained in the " Plain Answer," the reason must be obvious. It is not only the last, but the most authentic publication ; it has, or should have, corrected what is falsely alleged in the " Curfory Remarks ;" if it has, therefore, itself, been incorrect, it must be considered as calling most loudly for correction.

Indeed this is become more immediately proper and necessary to be done, because the question has now assumed a more important shape. It is no longer a matter of mere curiosity upon a few circumstances of private concernment. It now appears to involve the nearest interests of the country. It is become a subject of serious inquiry, whether we are properly governed ; and, strange to tell, the fitness and the capacity of the present ministers to carry on public affairs, is openly disputed and denied by
those

those very persons who profess to have been the means of placing them in their present situations.

To this, therefore, as to the most important point, my observations will be principally directed. I wish not to pry into the private correspondence or communications between Mr. Pitt and Mr. Addington. The latter gentleman, if I am rightly informed, has shewn a reserve upon those topics, which has been lamented by some of his friends. Whether this be politic or not, it is not necessary to decide: but I am persuaded that no honourable mind will condemn, if it do not entirely approve, the feelings out of which that reserve has grown.

Whatever, indeed, may be the cloud which may yet hang over any of these circumstances, it does not appear as if any the most anxious friends of Mr. Addington, have any great cause of alarm, when they observe so many men of the most acknowledged honour and discernment, originally the nearest and firmest friends of Mr. Pitt, all united in acknowledging the liberality and delicacy of Mr. Addington towards that gentleman. The public, indeed, may not be so easily satisfied; it may wish for clearer information. Luckily, as it appears to me, the several facts stated in the "Plain Answer," when properly

properly sifted and examined, will go near to furnish sufficient grounds upon which to form a tolerably correct judgment even upon these points. But, after all, the general question, upon the broad ground of the ability or incapacity of Ministers, is that in which the Public is more properly interested.

The points in dispute are stated with more precision and distinctness in the "Plain Answer," than in the other Pamphlet : and as the order of division which is there observed appears to me to be convenient, I shall, in the first instance, at least, adhere to it.

The grounds on which is rested the attack made upon the characters of Mr. Pitt, Lord Grenville, and Mr. Windham, (and the same points are intimately connected with the justification of Mr. Addington) are there stated to be "The time, the manner, and the occasion of their quitting their official situations ; the promise given and withdrawn of constant, active, and zealous support ; the circumstances of the Negotiation for the return of Mr. Pitt into office ; and the general conduct of those persons in Parliament."

Before I go into a particular examination of these points, I must, however, enter a sort of protest as to the manner in which those persons are joined together ; if, at least, by such union
upon

upon paper, it is meant to be implied that they stand upon the same grounds, and are to be supported by the same arguments. In great measure, as will be seen, their cases are extremely distinct from each other, and claim a separate consideration.

As to the first point however, we may in some sort consider them as entitled to join in their defence or apology. They certainly went out of office together, and for all that we are told, upon the same grounds. We have however had hints that there were then existing between them differences of opinion upon material points : the same probably which subsequent events have disclosed, and brought into notice.

The truth is, and it is sufficiently notorious, that the late Cabinet were always much divided in opinion, and that upon great and leading points. I believe too that these divisions have been among the chief *pre-disposing* causes of the late change. They may have had their operation upon the several members, even without their being perfectly sensible of it. And perhaps it is hence, that has in great measure arisen the mystery which has been suffered to hang over their resignation.* But, however, since it is their choice,

* What I allude to, is the variety of opinion which is understood to have existed in their plans for carrying on the war.

choice, and that of their friends, to rely upon what is called the Catholic Question, I will first examine it upon their own grounds, and I will do it the more readily, because, so treated, it will contribute materially to the forming of our judgment upon that part of the Question in which, as I have said before, the Public is principally concerned, that is, the comparative merits and talents of the late and present Ministry.

I do not find that either by the “near Observer,” or the “more accurate Observer,” much stress has been laid upon the intrinsic merit or propriety of the Question itself. I know not if the interests of the Church, and of the State, as intimately connected with it, might be considered by those Gentlemen as properly subordinate, and only material as they might affect the characters of the respective Gentlemen whose cause they have espoused. But, I apprehend, that to any unprejudiced man it must appear of the first consequence, for those who would justify the resignation of Mr. Pitt and his Colleagues, to shew that

It has been commonly said, that one man was for expeditions against foreign settlements, another was more partial to attacks nearer home; one was for holding high language to foreign powers, another for shewing a more pacific countenance.

the

the measure to which they clung with such pertinacity, was not only not open to blame in itself, but of great and undoubted utility. I mean to say, and I aver as a general proposition, that the man who makes the adoption of any particular measure the positive and fixed condition of his remaining in office, is bound to shew, in the first instance, that the measure was wise and good. It is not sufficient (I mean not for his justification as a Statesman) that he should think so : he must be certain, morally certain, of it : and I shall shew by and by that Mr. Pitt, at least, had abundant reason to be distrustful of his opinion upon the subject.

But this obligation, such as I have stated it, becomes inconceivably more strong and more binding, if the time when such a stipulation is made, be so critical and so big with danger, that the services of the individual so stipulating are particularly wanted, and cannot, with perfect safety to the State, be dispensed with. Now it seems to be agreed on all hands, that such was the crisis when this event took place. It is then essential for those who would defend the character of Mr. Pitt, not only in point of integrity, but of wisdom and ability ; still more for those who represent him as possessed of the only talents which can save the Nation, to shew that the mea-

sure which he so pressed, as even to put the Country to such imminent hazard, was not only wise in itself, but that it was wise to bring it forward at that moment, and wise to retain it, and to urge it under all the circumstances, and with all the obstinacy which I have stated.

This, however, is a question completely declined by the Apologist of Mr. Pitt. "Of the essential importance of the Question itself," says he, "and of the nature and tendency of the circumstances attending the discussion, the Ministers were to judge for themselves."*

Were they so? I grant that every man must judge for himself, nay, must act upon his own judgment; but if that judgment be wrong, and in a public matter, he must submit to be told of it. I will add, that this is strange language to be held in an Appeal professedly made to the Public. I will ask, what title have men who thus wrap themselves up in their own opinions, so furiously and acrimoniously to criticise and to reprobate the actions and sentiments of others? What right have Lord Grenville, or Mr. Pitt, or Mr. Pitt's adherents, to bestow such epithets upon the present Ministers, while they decline to give an account of their own conduct? We are also

* Plain Answer, p. 8.

given to understand, in the same strain of mystery, and certainly not very consistently with the declarations in Parliament of Mr. Pitt and Lord Grenville, or indeed the representation given of them in this very Pamphlet, that there was something more behind : that the Question (and the passage is made more important by *italics*) was attended by circumstances which gave it a very different shape : that “ had a similar difference “ of opinion existed, with respect to any other “ question, *attended by the same circumstances*, “ the result would, in all probability, have been “ exactly the same.” What those circumstances were we can only conjecture : we are left in that state of uncertainty which, as I shall presently observe, it seems to have been the object of the “ Plain Answer” rather to keep up than to remove. What I suppose the circumstances to have been, I shall state in its proper place : at this moment it may be best to return to the Question upon its general grounds.

I have before said that Mr. Pitt had sufficient reason in this case to distrust his judgment with respect to the Question thus brought forward : and I know not how that will be denied me, when I ground my assertion upon the declared sentiments of Mr. Pitt himself, upon his conduct both before this event and subsequent to it. Need I add, that I mean the decided opposition of Mr. Pitt

Pitt to Mr. Fox's motion for the Repeal of the Test Act in 1790, and the force and earnestness with which he argued against letting loose all sorts of Dissenters upon the Establishment, and, among the rest, those whom he characterized as the most dangerous of all—not only Roman Catholics, but Papists :* I appeal further to Mr. Pitt's sentiments at this moment; to his not having agitated the question in Parliament, and having, therefore, if not given it up, yet acquiesced in the propriety of not bringing it forward. Indeed, I was informed, at the time when the overtures were made for his return into office, that he had made up his mind upon that head, that he had actually relinquished it. As to any absolute pledge given to the Irish Roman Catholics upon the subject, as far as I can judge, none such is avowed, nor can even reasonably be inferred. † The question, therefore, must still rest

* See this point very forcibly stated in the Anti-Jacobin Review for November last, p. 305.

† There is some difficulty in knowing what to say upon this subject, or in exactly ascertaining how far the late ministers, or any individual of them, were pledged. There was a strange paper, or rather two papers (and they were thought not to be very wise ones) handed about in Ireland at the time of the change. But even according to the most rigid construction which can be put upon them, however they might affect the *return* of ministry into office, there is no hint of a *previous* pledge

rest upon the general grounds upon which I have put it. And if I am correct in the appeal which I have

pledge having existed, which could have obliged them to go out. It does not appear that Mr. Pitt or any body else, previous to the change actually taking place, was absolutely engaged to force the measure upon the king, or upon the nation. One does see indeed in that paper an evident desire to engage the Catholics in the support of those ministers who had " espoused their interests;" who had " sacrificed their own " situations in their cause." One even cannot help thinking that those men who were so earnest in courting and securing the good-will of so formidable a body, must have had an eye to coming in again even at the moment when they went out.

The papers may be seen both in Sir Richard Musgrave's and Mr. Plowden's publications; but they are here subjoined, that it may be seen whether this be an unfair construction.

" The leading part of his Majesty's ministers finding unmountable obstacles to the bringing forward measures of concession to the Catholic body whilst in office, have felt it impossible to continue in administration under the inability to propose it with the circumstances necessary to carrying the measure with all its advantages, and they have retired from his Majesty's service, considering this line of conduct as most likely to contribute to its ultimate success. The Catholic body will therefore see how much their future hopes must depend upon strengthening their cause by good conduct; in the mean time they will prudently consider their prospects as arising from the persons who now espouse their interests, and compare them with those, which they could look to from any other quarter; they may with confidence rely on the support of all those who retire, and of many who remain in office, when it can be given with a prospect of ~~success~~ success.

I have made to Mr. Pitt himself, in my reasoning upon his own measures, I need say no more

“ success. They may be assured, that *Mr. Pitt will do his utmost to establish their cause in the public favor, and prepare the way for their finally attaining their objects:* and the Catholics will feel, that as Mr. Pitt could not concur in a hopeless attempt to force it now, that he must at all times repress with the same decision as if he held an adverse opinion, any unconstitutional conduct in the Catholic body.

“ Under these circumstances it cannot be doubted that the Catholics will take the most loyal, dutiful and patient line of conduct, that they will not suffer themselves to be led into measures, which can, by any construction, give a handle to the opposers of their wishes, either to misinterpret their principles, or to raise an argument for resisting their claims; but that by their prudent and exemplary demeanour they will afford additional grounds to the growing number of their advocates, to enforce their claims on proper occasions, until their objects can be finally and advantageously attained.”

“ The Sentiments of a sincere Friend (i. e. Marquis Cornwallis) to the Catholic Claims.

“ If the Catholics should now proceed to violence, or entertain any ideas of obtaining their object by convulsive measures, or forming associations with men of Jacobinical principles, they must of course lose the support and aid of those who have sacrificed their own situations in their cause, but who would at the same time feel it to be their indispensable duty to oppose every thing tending to confusion.

“ On the other hand, should the Catholics be sensible of the benefits they possess by having so many characters of
“ eminence

more upon the subject: it is sufficiently apparent, that it could never be wise or justifiable in him, (I say, justifiable as a Statesman) even if, having changed his opinion, he chose to agitate a measure of such doubtful utility, to maintain it with that pertinacity which ended in his resignation.

But this will be still more apparent, when we come to the other ground upon which the matter is considered, with respect to "the time," and the public circumstances when the event took place; for it is not to be forgotten, as I have above stated, that there may be circumstances which will render it very unwise to bring forward even a measure that is wise in itself. If now the situation of the country was such as to stand most particularly in need of Mr. Pitt's abilities, of the abilities of his colleagues; was it wise, was it justifiable in them to lay such stress upon a measure, which, taking the whole of Mr. Pitt's conduct together, I am warranted in saying he must have considered as a matter, the ex-

" *eminence pledged not to embark in the service of Government,*
 " *except on the terms of the Catholic privileges being obtained,*
 " *it is to be hoped, that on balancing the advantages and dis-*
 " *advantages of their situation they would prefer a quiet*
 " *and peaceable demeanour to any line of conduct of an op-*
 " *posite description.*"

Plowden's Historical Review, vol. iii. p. 944.

pediency of which was by no means clear, as a matter even of perilous experiment? Was it wise, I say, in him or in his associates, so to urge such a measure, so to insist upon it, as to make the continuance of their services to depend upon it; in short, in their opinion, to put the safety of the country to the hazard, and in the end to leave it destitute of its best support? Is there, I say, wisdom, is there true patriotism, is there a particle of sound judgment in this?

Now, as to the real extent of the danger to which the country was exposed, and the magnitude of the crisis to which it was brought, very different representations have been made of them by the two "Observers." Either of them however, let me first premise, fully warrants the argument which I have above maintained. It is therefore with another view that I am now to consider the subject. Justice to Mr. Addington, as well as to Mr. Pitt, requires that, without exaggeration on the one side or on the other, we should ascertain with some correctness, what was at that time the real state of affairs, what were the difficulties which the new ministry may be fairly said to have encountered.

Most unquestionably the picture which the Near Observer has drawn, is most grievously overcharged; * "the complicated predicament of

* *Curfory Remarks*, p. 14.

“evil and despondency,” “the want of a distinct end,” “or remaining object in the war,” and the “hopelessness of our expeditions” are expressions which I should have thought none but the members, or the friends, of what is now called the old opposition, would have used. As little on the other hand can I agree in its full extent to the splendid representation given by the other gentleman of * “Jacobinism almost eradicated;” “Ireland ready to be tranquillized;” “our fleets triumphant;” “the public credit completely restored;” “the nation reconciled to the exertions which were called for.” It is a mistaken notion, which was indeed entertained generally enough, that Jacobinism was, or is eradicated. I should think that the Middlesex and Nottingham elections had made that point sufficiently clear. As to the tranquillity of Ireland, it may, I think, be fairly concluded, that in the opinion of Mr. Pitt and his colleagues, it was nothing less than secure, since it could only be established by a measure which many, I believe most people, and probably Mr. Addington, consider as big with the utmost ruin. As to the anticipated triumph of our fleet at Copenhagen, I shall shew that also to have been nothing less than certain. As to public credit, the funds were not, I believe, at all higher (56 and a fraction) than they are

* Plain Answer, p. 9.

at this moment, when we have to experience not only the same or as great difficulties in our commerce with the North, but are exposed to, what most people think, very serious danger from the projected invasion of our enemy. And as to the acquiescence of the nation, it must not be denied that there was an expectation and desire (much too general I will say) of peace.

I was not one of those who entertained gloomy apprehensions; I combated, within my narrow circle, and as strongly as I could, every cry for peace; and would have had every one prepared for a longer contest. I did not despair—I never despaired of the “*res publica*,” but it were folly, or something worse, to say that it was not a moment of great anxiety, of fearful and perplexing doubt; that any man, who had not some firmness of mind, nay, a very considerable portion of it, would at such a moment have undertaken the management of public affairs.

There is a mistake very commonly made, when men speak of times past, that they take into their consideration events which have subsequently happened; they do this, even when they are reasoning upon people’s feelings at the moment. Thus, because our armies conquered in Egypt, because Lord Nelson was victorious at Copenhagen, men argue as if their success had been certain from the very outset; as if even the
passage

passage of the Sound had not been considered as an object of great danger. It is most certain, and it were base injustice to our gallant seamen and soldiers not to acknowledge, that in both instances they had unusual difficulties to encounter, most extraordinary exertions to make. It must be said, with respect to Egypt in particular, that, without making very large allowances indeed, for British valour and British skill, we cannot state the forces sent upon that expedition as fully adequate to their object. It does appear as if the late ministers had not had correct information respecting the numbers of the French troops in that quarter. Our gallant battalions had therefore to effect a landing, and to fight their way under many disadvantages, in the face of an enemy superior in numbers, as well as in the knowledge of the country. Was there then, as to them, I will ask, no room for anxiety? And as to Copenhagen, setting aside the other circumstances of that very hard-fought engagement, and particularly the advantage derived from the wonderful presence of mind of Lord Nelson, what, if a certain signal, of which so much has been said, and about the existence of which there seems to be no doubt, what, if that only had been obeyed; as, in the regular course of things, it should have been? And now, let me add, what, if only one of these expeditions had

had failed (and Mr. Addington had to contemplate such an event as possible at least; the recent failure at Ferrol even stared him in the face), what might the consequences have been to the country? what would have been the situation of ministers?

Those who really wish to form a fair judgment upon the subject, should turn back to the newspapers of the day: they will there read, as part of the speeches in parliament, or as the sentiments of men out of doors, assertions much stronger than any which I have made: such indeed as sufficiently warrant the "Near Observer" in the use of the word "consternation," and the "Accurate Observer" in his adoption of it.— They will there find the times represented as "full of terror and dismay," the "crisis as most awful and momentous," as most "alarming," as "what in the whole of the British history had not its equal." Among the distresses of the moment, the scarcity, which still continued, is not to be forgotten. But indeed, besides the general difficulties, there was added one which pressed in a particular manner upon Mr. Addington himself. He could not but be aware that he must be known as coming into administration in direct opposition to the measure of "Catholic emancipation," as it was called. What might be the immediate consequences of withholding

holding this boon, could not be ascertained: he must have prepared himself to meet the resentment of all those who expected to share in it; not the Roman Catholics only, but every species of Dissenters.

Of what importance this was conceived to be, may be collected from the words of Lord Carlisle, as I find them reported in a Paper of that time.* In a debate of the House of Lords on the 9th of February (the day on which the change of Ministry was announced), he is stated to have characterised the new Administration, as an Administration “ weak, inefficient, and defective in every point of view, intended to replace “ one of strength, vigour and abilities.” “ This “ wretched Administration,” he added, “ was “ also to undertake the dangerous task of refusing a boon which a strong and powerful Administration had shrunk from with apprehension.”

I the more readily quote these words, not only as they furnish a strong confirmation of what I have above said, respecting the supposed tranquilization of Ireland, as well as this particular difficulty which Mr. Addington had to contemplate; but as they also give the first example of that torrent of abuse, that strain of unqualified

* Porcupine, February 10th.

reprobation, which he was so early called upon to encounter.

From all this, and more might be added, some judgment may be formed, whether it is likely that a want of firmness should be a prominent feature in the character of a man who consented to take so responsible an office under such complicated difficulties. As to any undue motive, as none such has ever been imputed to Mr. Addington, as none can with the least shadow of propriety be imputed to him, he needs no defence upon that head. The truth is, and every body must acknowledge it, that it was by a concurrence of extraordinary circumstances that he was, in a manner, compelled to become Minister; it was (let us speak plainly) by the distressful situation to which Mr. Pitt and his Colleagues had reduced their Sovereign. They had proposed to him a measure, which not only appeared to him unwise and impolitic, but to which he felt that he could not give his assent without a breach of his Coronation Oath: yet they ceased not to urge the point, nay, they made a concurrence in it on his part the express condition of their continuance in office. Professing, as they afterwards did, to have been governed only by conscientious motives, they allowed not to their Master the privilege which they claimed for themselves: of his conscience, even when awakened by the sanctity

sanctity of an oath, no account was to be taken. When it is considered that in this streight his Majesty was, in a manner, shut out from the common resource of resorting to the Opposition ; that, though Mr. Pitt had changed his opinion since 1790, it was plain enough that Mr. Fox had not ; when, I say, these things are considered, we must not wonder, if there were found individuals who thought, as the " Near Observer " does, that " It appeared as if the friends of the " Ex-Ministry would have liked better to have " left his Majesty altogether without a Cabinet ; " as if there had been some expectation in the then Ministry that his Majesty might be forced into a compliance with their measures. Nay, I have heard this distinctly avowed by persons, who scrupled not to tax Mr. Addington with a breach of friendship in accepting the situation which Mr. Pitt resigned.* This, however, as not directly affecting Mr. Pitt, or only as matter of surmise, I would not dwell upon. Still the most natural, if not the only way which presented itself to his Majesty of avoiding what he conceived to be a breach of his oath, was to look out for some individual who was not fettered by engagements, and who would endeavour to form an

* This conjecture appears to me to receive considerable corroboration from the contents of the Papers stated in the preceding Note.

Administration at liberty to concur in the views of their Sovereign. Such a man was found in Mr. Addington; and those who think, as I believe the great body of the Nation now think, that the measure in question was both ruinous and unconstitutional, must applaud him for having come forward to the relief of his Sovereign in such a critical moment. He was in fact so applauded at the time, by some of these very writers who are now most lavish of their abuse against him, who cease not to impute to him the most dishonest and mercenary views. * The fact is, that his taking office under those circumstances, with a relinquishment of that situation which he was then holding with a degree of reputation and ease to himself which is absolutely unparalleled, was considered by him, and was considered by those who proposed it to him, and must be considered by every candid man, as an absolute and real sacrifice.

It should however be noticed, that the "more accurate Observer," in his commendation of Mr. Pitt, has asserted, † "that that Gentleman made a distinct offer to retain his situation until the War should be ended, and the Country

* See particularly the *Porcupine* of that time, contrasted with the *Register* of the present day, by the same Editor.

† Plain Answer, p. 17.

"relieved

“ relieved from its most pressing difficulties, provided that no attempt would be made in the mean time to prejudge the important question, the difference of opinion on which had led to his resignation.” I have heard something of this offer, now mentioned to the public for the first time ; but what after all does it amount to ? Will this writer explain to us what was implied in the assurance thus required. By not “ judging the question,” was it meant to be implied, that his Majesty might at some future time admit the proposition which he now rejected ? that his conscience might be soothed into compliance ? If it meant this, it meant what Mr. Pitt in similar circumstances would have rejected with disdain. If it meant not that, it meant nothing. After all, why make terms, or talk of assurances ? For who brought this question forward ? Who pressed it upon the Sovereign ? Who but Mr. Pitt and his Colleagues ? Could they not then suffer it quietly to drop ? Could they not have retained their opinion, and suffered the King to do the same ; and Mr. Pitt, notwithstanding, have remained in office until the War should be ended, and the Country relieved from its difficulties.*

Thus

* After all it might be of great importance (since the fact is brought forward as being important) to know distinctly
 2 2 through

Thus far I have reasoned upon the facts as they may be collected from the "Plain Answer;" but it is time to remove this veil of mystery, and to call the attention of the Public to the real circumstances of the transaction. In doing this, let it be observed that I shall state nothing which is not as generally known as are the causes of any former change of Ministry. But some how or other (whether from accident or design) the real truth has been rather kept back. It is now become absolutely indispensable to bring it forward, on account of the idea which has gone abroad and been encouraged, if not by Mr. Pitt, yet by those who are his avowed friends, that it is entirely to the friendship of that Gentleman, that Mr. Addington owes his situation. He has been considered by some as the mere puppet to be moved by his predecessor; and

"through whom," and "to whom," the offer was made, and by whom" not accepted. I say this, because from the very unequivocal evidence which we have of Mr. Addington's desire that Mr. Pitt should be in office, whether as continuing in it, or returning to it, it is evident that he must have desired the offer to be accepted. But indeed is it certain—will the "Plain Observer" venture to say, that he is not mistaken in saying, that "it was not accepted?" I can conceive pretty good reasons why Mr. Pitt himself should rather wish to recal his offer, when he considered that a Minister remaining in office, under such terms, must lose a considerable portion of his influence, and the Government be comparatively weak.

many

many persons have thought, or affected to think, that without the recommendation and support of that Gentleman, he never could have been placed, or continued to be, at the head of Administration. This idea is the more necessary to be refuted, because it is connected with that other equally unfounded and mischievous position, that the present Administration are in themselves weak and inefficient, and have, in fact, no strength but what they borrow from the support of others. Such are the notions which are at least favoured, if not actually propagated by the present counsellors of Mr. Pitt, and some of them expressly avowed in a publication sent out into the world under his own eye.* Now mark how "a plain tale shall put them down."

The facts are these: The late cabinet had arranged their measures respecting the Roman Catholics, and of course the abolition of all tests, without the least communication with their Sovereign. This very extraordinary change in the constitution was all concerted and ready to be brought forward without his Majesty having the least intimation of it; somehow or other, however, it did transpire, and came to his Majesty's ears. On the Tuesday (the of February) the Imperial Parliament had met, and the members proceeded to be sworn in. It was understood (the public will

* Plain Answer, p. 29, 69, 78, 79.

recollect all these circumstances) that the King was to come down to the House of Lords on the Thursday, for the purpose of opening the Sessions. All at once this was altered, and his Majesty's coming down delayed till the Monday. It was assigned as a reason, that more time should be given for members to be sworn in. The reason, however, was this: At the levee on the Wednesday, his Majesty, having learnt what was going forward, expressed himself to Mr. Dundas (now Lord Melville) in very strong and pointed terms upon the subject. He did this publicly, and in the hearing of the whole circle. This was, I suppose, one of the *circumstances*, and a principal one, alluded to by the "Accurate Observer," p. 8. It probably gave the first impulse to the change. What, however, is of most importance to the present question, is this, and let the reader bear it in mind, that Mr. Addington was, and continued to be ignorant of this, as well as of all that had passed, till the moment when, most unexpectedly, he received his Majesty's command to attend him at St. James's, for the purpose of forming an administration.* Whoever considers the

* This is the real and plain state of the case ; so little pretence is there for stating Mr. Pitt to be the promoter, or even the recommender to office, of Mr. Addington. After this, would not one wonder (if from such a man any thing could excite

the circumstances of Mr. Addington's situation at that time, as I have before stated them, will not think it strange that he hesitated; that he took every means to prevent the change that was in agitation; that it was not without great reluctance, and after some delay, that the matter was settled. It was probably during the interval, that the offer was made, which is spoken of in "The Plain Answer," When, however, the matter was settled, not only Mr. Pitt, but every member of the old administration expressed their hearty joy and satisfaction at it. They felt (it was impossible that they should not feel) how very advantageous it was to them personally, that, if they were to go out, they should be succeeded by men who were well disposed towards them; who had approved, and would support, the measures of their administration. Let any one consider what would have been the consequences, if his Majesty had been driven, as he might have been, to call for assistance upon any of the members of what is termed the "Old Opposition." What could the late cabinet have expected in that

excite wonder) at the impudence of Cobbett, who, in one of his late Registers, actually states as a fact, that Mr. Pitt almost hawked about the administration; that he offered it first to Mr. Ryder, (now Lord Harrowby) before he offered it to Mr. Addington !!!

case,

case, but that they should be harrassed with repeated motions of censure? That every failure, every embarrassment which was experienced, should be ascribed to the folly or the wickedness of their counsels? That the nation should be told by those, who would then perhaps have carried the popular cry with them, that affairs had been so misconducted, as to render it almost impossible either to carry on war, or to make peace? Would not every little defect in their administration have been brought forward; all their merits kept out of sight? From this, and much more, they were relieved by Mr. Addington's consenting to become their successor. By his engaging to carry on administration, they became at once secure from every unfair attack, they were enabled to retire in peace, and without, as they conceived, any diminution of character or of reputation.

After this, is it not, I will ask, rather too much for these gentlemen to be now haggling and quibbling about the sort and degree of support which they engaged to give? Will it be believed, that they were *making terms* with the man who was relieving them from very great and very serious difficulties? Does not the very nature of the transaction carry with it internal and decisive evidence, that the promise of support,

port, by whomsoever and whensoever it was given, must have been both broad, and cordial and unqualified?

Now, however, we are told, that this promise of support was not unqualified; that, on the contrary, it was given subject to express limitations. And this is become a material point to be ascertained, because Lord Grenville most unquestionably has withdrawn his support altogether; and Mr. Pitt's has only been continued, of late most particularly, with some reserve and great coldness: as to Mr. Windham, he seems not to be at all implicated in the question.

As to this indeed we must, it seems, come at the truth, if possible, from something besides the direct evidence; for here our two witnesses positively and flatly contradict each other; what is expressly asserted on the one side, is as expressly denied on the other. If, however, we should be disposed even to admit, in this instance, the claim of the "More Accurate Observer," to a "nearer observation," yet one thing, in addition to what I have already stated, must be allowed; that a promise of "constant, active, and zealous support," must have meant, if words mean any thing, something that was not absolutely precarious, something that implied personal confidence; something like a promise, that, at least, a favourable construction would be put upon the mea-

fures of the person so to be supported ; that the support would be given chearfully, and not withdrawn but for reasons the most weighty ; not for slight and petty differences of opinion.

Now, I will ask any man who has examined, or will take the pains to examine, the conduct of Lord Grenville, or even of Mr. Pitt, for more than a year past, whether any such cordiality, or confidence, or perfect co-operation, has been displayed by them? Whether, on the contrary, as to Lord Grenville almost from the beginning, and as to Mr. Pitt for a considerable time back, they have not appeared to look upon their successors with a certain degree of suspicion and distrust? And whether the assistance which they have given, has not been bestowed with a niggard hand; with a countenance that partook of indifference at least, if not of hostility? Have not, I will add, these promisers of support been all along the first to canvass the proceedings of administration, with the utmost jealousy and particularity? Have they not shewn themselves studious to point out defects; to devise objections?

I know that in one very remarkable instance, Mr. Pitt has supported the ministry without reserve, and with great effect; but I am not sure that even then his manner, or even language, was such as quite suited the long habits of friendship

ship in which he had lived with Mr. Addington ; and he has lately taken care, materially to qualify, I had almost said to retract, the share which they have enjoyed of his approbation. But indeed, independently of the observations which naturally arise out of Mr. Pitt's support of the peace, it is plain that this furnishes no contradiction to what I have alleged, since, compared with his subsequent conduct, it is considered on all hands, by Lord Grenville as well as by every body else, as a proof of great inconsistency in that gentleman.

Such is the light in which the subject appears to me, when taken under a general view. It does seem as if the promise of support (whatever it was, provided only we suppose it given in sincerity and simplicity of heart,) had not been substantially complied with, not complied with according to the spirit of such an engagement.

Some people may think, that Mr. Pitt and his colleagues, perhaps Lord Grenville more particularly, may have seen their error ; that they have come to regret the situation which they so wantonly threw away ; that, being dissatisfied with their own conduct, they have, as many people do, thought it better to be angry with any body else than with themselves ; that, in this humour, they have begun by dealing captiously

with their friends, and at last worked themselves up into a downright quarrel.

I will not affirm that this is the case, but I will say that their conduct will be easier accounted for, upon this supposition, than upon any other.

But not to rely upon a general view, let us come to somewhat a more particular examination. The supposed limitation upon this promise of support, must have been either expressed or implied. We are told that there was something distinctly expressed by Mr. Pitt, upon three points,* but as neither of the points are detailed, it is impossible for us to say, whether the conditions were such as ought to have been imposed, whether they were or could have been accepted by Mr. Addington, or whether, after acceptance, they were broken. Upon what can be only vague conjecture, it would be idle to waste our time. If these points are those upon which Mr. Pitt has made his stand in opposition, they will come to be considered by and by. My firm opinion, however, is, that no express promise of support was given, and if so, there is an end also to any supposed restriction or qualification of that promise. Both rested merely in implication.

* Plain Answer, p. 20.

What then could be the limitation which could or ought to be fairly implied? Let us take Lord Grenville's words in the House of Lords, as stated by the "Accurate Observer;" *according to him*, his lordship connected his support with a promise of the present administration to "continue to act upon the same *general* system which had been adopted by their predecessors." Let us now admit this as the principle of Lord Grenville's conduct, both in his support and opposition; only bearing in mind that what ministers were to follow was the *general* system adopted by their predecessors. This indeed, if it had not been so declared, must have been so understood; for to promise support only upon condition of approving every *particular* and minute act of an administration, would be perfectly nugatory. Now, this system may be (I had almost said, must be) considered under two heads; as it relates, first, to our internal government, and secondly, to our foreign relations, particularly the war with France.

As to the first point, I apprehend that, what that system was, may be summed up in a few words: that it consisted (and surely I put it not unfavourably for the late ministers,) in the maintenance of our constitution, and of the monarchy in particular, against the attacks of faction, and more especially, what is called Jacobinism. Now

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as in respect of this, I have heard no charge against Mr. Addington, as having been guilty of any positive offence or criminal negligence, I may put that out of the question.

I go indeed upon the presumption that, the omitting to renew the bill for the suspension of the Habeas Corpus act, and other bills of the same nature, will not be considered as such a departure. It will hardly be imputed as a crime to Mr. Addington, that under his administration the nation is more generally quiet and apparently contented, while at the same time, we have no seditious assemblies, while the constitution is preserved, and the sovereign beloved and respected.

We come then to the second head; that of transactions with foreign powers, and especially with that which seems almost to have swallowed up all the others, the government (for it cannot be called either monarchy, aristocracy, or democracy) of France. With respect to this, I understand the object to be attained by the war with that power, to have been distinctly stated by Mr. Pitt, as "Indemnity for the past and security for the future." This has been so often repeated, that as to this point there can be no mistake. Now, a peace has been made by Mr. Addington with that government, about which, ~~certainly~~ there have been different opinions, and various: but the only light in which we are

now to view it, is, whether that peace was a departure from the general system adopted by the last administration. Perhaps other people may claim a right of judging whether it was such a departure, but surely when the accusation is brought by members of the old cabinet, nothing can be more fair and unexceptionable than to refer ourselves to the declared opinion of the individual members who composed that very cabinet.

Now as to this, the first of them, the acknowledged prime minister, Mr. Pitt, has given his decided approbation to the peace; we must conclude that it is such a peace as he would have made. I will ask them, with such a sanction as this, with the head of the late administration giving his full concurrence to the measure which is excepted against, can ministers fairly be considered as liable to be arraigned "for having departed from the general system of their predecessors."? From whom are we to take the general sentiments of a cabinet, but from him who is allowed to take the lead in it? who shall say whether a rule or principle has been adhered to, if not the person who himself laid it down?

But indeed, I need not rest upon Mr. Pitt's decision only; let the voices of the late cabinet individually be counted, and Lords Grenville and Spencer, and Mr. Windham are still

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but a minority. Lord Melville, I admit, did not approve of the peace, but he has not on that or any other account, gone into opposition.

This, however, is not all: take not only the present opinions of the late ministers, but, what is stronger, examine their measures. Did they not themselves treat with the French government, under the Directory? Did they not proffer terms, in the first instance, which, even if they had been adhered to, (and they were professedly not an ultimatum) were not very widely different from those in question? Does the Peace of Amiens, I say, if fairly and candidly considered, deserve to be reprobated, as a departure from the general system of those who conducted the negotiations at Lisle?

If this reasoning be just, and I see not how it is defective, if the great and important measure upon which mens' minds are divided, affords no justification for Lord Grenville's conduct, let him not, let not his advocates, resort to differences upon petty points, to quarrels for straws, which none but men, previously dissatisfied, will raise, and which do no credit to those who enter into them.

I must therefore take it, that it does appear, that the conduct of ministers has not been such, ~~in~~ the opinion of their predecessors themselves, as to set Lord Grenville or his colleagues free
from

from the promise which they had given, even upon the grounds stated by himself. But I will go farther, and say, that, if we take their own judgment, a difference of opinion upon the question of peace, or war with France, is no cause of disunion between people really united, and therefore ought to be no reason for the same people to withdraw their support, where they really meant to give it.

I need hardly add that, I allude to the difference of opinion which prevailed in the late cabinet upon the "Projet" at Lisle. Mr. Windham, it seems, totally disapproved of it; yet he not only went on with the same persons in administration, but even, as it is stated, stood up in defence of the measure in Parliament. Let it be recollected, that a member of a cabinet is now understood to be responsible for every measure in which he joins; and yet Mr. Windham, under this responsibility, supported a measure which he condemned; and Lord Grenville and he went on in perfect harmony together. How then should it happen, that in a case where no responsibility was incurred, and only a simple assent, or perhaps a forbearance to dissent was required, nay, even a dissent simply and without violence expressed, would have been accepted, such an uncommon delicacy should all at once have prevailed, a sense of duty so imperious should all at once have

shewn itself? How is it, that precisely the same measure (for the difference as to this purpose, is immaterial) which was before so coolly acquiesced in, should now provoke such a torrent of indignation?

But this, too, is not all: How is it that this same Peace of Amiens, which has all of a sudden made such a monster of Mr. Addington, has in no way derogated from the lustre of Mr. Pitt's character? How is it that, while it has set Lord Grenville at such a fearful distance from the former gentleman, it has only connected his Lordship more closely with the latter? It will not be said, that there is this difference between them, that Mr. Addington made the peace, while Mr. Pitt only would have made it if he could. As statesmen, I presume, they are both equally committed, guilty or innocent in an equal degree. How then, I repeat it, can Lord Grenville assign that measure as a just cause of violent opposition to Mr. Addington, which he considers as no bar to an union with Mr. Pitt?

Is it then too much to say, are there not grounds to conclude, that either Lord Grenville was not, from the very beginning, hearty in the promise of support which he gave, or that he very soon repented, and determined to get rid of it.

I will admit that this cannot, upon equally strong

strong grounds, be inferred, of Mr. Pitt. I am willing to believe, that having once entered into engagements, he was disposed, under any supposed disadvantage, to adhere to them. I will believe, that he was not so insensible to the force of private friendship, as to resolve all at once to separate himself from the companion of his youth, and the friend of his riper years; from the man with whom he had lived so long upon terms of the utmost familiarity; with whom, down to the last moment, he had been in the habit of communicating in the most unreserved manner, upon every public and every private subject. I believe that he felt, as every man must feel, that, laying aside all quibbling upon terms, Mr. Addington, by taking office with his approbation, and under such circumstances, had acquired a claim to his support; to real, honest, and substantial support. I believe, as I said before, that he was disposed to give it, and will further acknowledge, that he set out with giving it most fairly and honourably. But Mr. Pitt, though a great man, is but a man; and all men, even great men, and great men perhaps most of all, have persons about them by whose advice or conversation they are liable to be influenced; and by whose partial or interested views, they not unfrequently suffer their private judgment to be warped. Some of these minor

friends, (or "pretended friends," I might say with the "More Accurate Observer,") of Mr. Pitt had gone out with him, and probably (according to the expression reported of a late noble lord, when the coalition ministry was routed) because they "thought it the best lay." They imagined that they had only walked out in order to come in again in higher situations. When they found this event delayed, nay, that from the turn which things were taking, it became a little problematical whether it would ever take place, they naturally became uneasy; that uneasiness was vented by some of them in Parliament, and in terms which were generally thought rather extraordinary. But in order to accomplish their ends, it was further necessary, not only that the ministry should go out, but that Mr. Pitt should be active in turning them out. To persuade him, therefore, to declare himself in opposition, became to them an object of the first consequence; and it is easy to conceive, that means of effecting this would not in their opinion be wanting. In particular, the idea which was so studiously propagated of the weakness and inability of ministers might be brought forward, the dangers of the country might be exaggerated, and much regret be expressed that it should be left destitute of his support, and then, as of course, the persuasion that he

he was the only man who could save the state, would soon be converted into a duty incumbent upon him to wrest the administration from the feeble hands in which it was placed.

It was owing probably to suggestions like these, or causes of this nature, that towards the end of the year before last, a gradual decrease began to be observed in the cordiality of Mr. Pitt's proceedings towards Mr. Addington; and there appeared sufficient reason to apprehend, that unless some alteration took place, the minister would soon see his former friend ranging himself in decided opposition, or maintaining such a suspicious and uncertain neutrality, as would be not less, and perhaps more detrimental than the most declared hostility.

It was, no doubt, in order to avert a state of things so distressing to his private as well as to his public feelings, to procure a return of that friendship which he continued affectionately to cherish, as well as to secure to the country the more immediate assistance of abilities which were valued as highly by him as by any man alive, that Mr. Addington, early in the last year, readily listened to suggestions thrown out (no matter by whom) of Mr. Pitt's being disposed to enter again into administration. This brings us to the consideration of our third point, viz.

“ The circumstances of the negotiation for the
“ return

“ return of Mr. Pitt into office :” and here again, I shall have to shew that the “ More Accurate “ Observer” is wrong, not only in his reasoning, but in a point of fact ; in the very contradiction which he gives to the “ Near Observer” as to that fact.

Now I would first observe, that it seems to me of no great consequence by whom the first *formal* intimation was given ; and I am not therefore inclined to dispute the assertion of the “ More “ Accurate Observer,” “ that the negotiation “ originated with Mr. Addington.” I of course acquit Mr. Pitt of any imputation which could arise from the contrary supposition. I cannot, however, subscribe to the assertions of that gentleman, that Mr. Addington was led to do it by a sense of his weakness, which made “ his wish “ for Mr. Pitt increase with the difficulty of “ his situation.” This is a paltry device to make people suppose that Mr. Addington was apprehensive he could not stand without the aid of Mr. Pitt.* He had no such apprehensions, and the

* This is clear, from the era of the commencement of these negotiations being kept out of sight. The whole is thrown forward to the end of March, when the renewal of the war began to be looked for ; and not a word is said of what passed in January, when Sebastiani’s Report had not been published, and when therefore the preservation of peace was still in contemplation.

the event has proved that he had no reason to entertain any such apprehensions. His motives
I have

temptation. But, perhaps, this was only that overture, on the part of Mr. Addington, which is characterised by the "More Accurate Observer," as being "too foolish, I had almost said too insulting, to be mentioned." If the date of this be as I have supposed it, it is sufficiently apparent why it is not mentioned. But further, what is all this delicacy upon the subject? Why will not the gentlemen speak out? is it indeed in mere mercy to Mr. Addington? Why these hints, and inuendos, and half sentences? What was this same overture? how made, and through whom? What friend of Mr. Pitt's or of Mr. Addington's was it, that had the front to take upon himself the making of an overture to Mr. Pitt, which was not only foolish, but almost insulting? I have heard only of Lord Melville and Mr. Long as having been at all engaged in any negotiation. Did either of those gentlemen venture to be the bearer of such a proposal to Mr. Pitt? Would either of them open their lips to him upon any offer that they did not conceive to be perfectly honourable and liberal?—Really, this kind of management brings back to one's mind what we read respecting the conduct of the "Little Senate" of another great man. We see this new band of Theban brothers, after the model of their predecessors,

Willing to wound, and yet afraid to strike;
Just hint a fault, and hesitate dislike.

But now, suppose an overture was made, short of Mr. Pitt's returning to the very situation which he formerly occupied; might there not be some reason for this? Let any man consider the pledge given by Mr. Pitt to the Roman Catholics of Ireland in the papers above referred to, and say, if there was
not

I have already stated, and will state again, as what, in the eyes of every unprejudiced person, must do him the greatest honour. Independent of his own private feelings, he conceived that he should best consult the advantage of his Sovereign and the country, by procuring for them the assistance of all the talents and the abilities which could be made useful, and by giving all possible effort to those talents. Therefore it was that Mr. Addington's proposal ultimately extended even to placing Mr. Pitt at the head of Administration, to making him as much prime minister as he was before, and indeed, I believe, more so; for I believe that he would have found Mr. Addington a much more tractable colleague than Lord Grenville. This the "Accurate Observer" well knows, and yet in several passages he intimates the direct contrary. In one page he states, that the professed object of the negotiation was "to place Mr. Pitt at the head of the government of the country;"* yet, in the page immediately opposite, we are told, forsooth, that Mr. Pitt "had no inclination

not strong ground for doubting whether he would, or indeed could, with any degree of consistency, again take the first seat in administration, while the demands of that body of people remained unsatisfied?

* Plain Answer, p. 28.

“ to take office merely *as an accession* to the
“ present administration.”

Nothing can more decidedly prove Mr. Pitt to have been wrong in his refusal, than the pains which are taken to disguise the true state of the case, and to put it upon any ground but the true one. Why talk of “ terms dictated by “ the present ministers ?” As if any thing hard or unfair was meant to Mr. Pitt ; as if it was not professed and intended to put Mr. Pitt on a footing not only of equality with Mr. Addington, but, as the “ Near Observer” truly states, “ beyond it :”

Let us take the fact as stated :—“ The proposal
“ was made through a friend (Lord Melville is
“ mentioned) for Mr. Pitt to resume his former
“ situation in the Cabinet, and that vacancies
“ would be made for the purpose of admitting
“ Lord Melville into the Cabinet, and others of
“ Mr. Pitt’s friends into different official situations.”—Now let it be considered, who, besides Mr. Addington, are the members of the Cabinet ? Be it remembered that they were originally Mr. Pitt’s friends, and not Mr. Addington’s ; that they even came into the Cabinet, not only invited, but named by Mr. Pitt ; and what could be apprehended by Mr. Pitt from an administration composed of such persons ? What doubt could be entertained of his maintaining all the

influence and all the preponderance which belong to a Prime Minister? Can any man seriously believe that he could object upon any such grounds? For we are not told what situation Mr. Addington could be placed in upon any such supposition, or how it was to be contrived that he should take the lead of his leader. The fact is, that in this respect, as in all others, Mr. Addington acted towards Mr. Pitt with that full confidence which became an honourable man towards one whom he considered to be equally honourable, and, as yet, his friend. He offered either to go out entirely, or to take the situation, whatever it was, which Mr. Pitt should assign him; such a situation as would put it out of his power, if he were so inclined, to be again Mr. Pitt's successor. Could now, I ask, Mr. Addington give stronger or more unequivocal proofs of his sincerity, of his attachment, to Mr. Pitt, nay, implicit reliance upon him? If any thing was wanting, I might add Lord Melville's judgment upon the point; his mind was so completely satisfied, that he lamented and condemned Mr. Pitt's obstinacy. Will it be supposed that such an old statesman as he, with all his experience, could be mistaken, or that he joined in deceiving Mr. Pitt?

To a proposal so liberal, so friendly, hear what, according to the "Accurate Observer,"

was

was Mr. Pitt's answer: " He would not at all " enter into the question of arrangements without a message from His Majesty."—Well now, suppose that message received, would he then listen only for a moment to Mr. Addington? No; "*he* would then submit" (not a word all this time of Mr. Addington more than if he were dead) " to His Majesty's consideration an administration composed of members of the last " and present ministry," of whom those only were specifically named who were known to be decidedly hostile to Mr. Addington, and to have treated him with the utmost contempt and obloquy.

I know not how this view of the case strikes the " Accurate Observer," or will strike any indifferent person; but, if I could believe this answer to have been really given, I should say it almost justified all that has been said by Mr. Pitt's bitterest enemies, of his intolerable arrogance and disregard for the feelings of others. What! to a proposal, and such a proposal, made by a minister in place, an answer is given which considers him as a person not at all to be treated with; as a mere messenger to make known to His Majesty the conditions upon which this lofty individual would vouchsafe his services. Such is the statement which this judicious advocate puts forth, as coming from the first authority.

His whole efforts are directed to make the public believe, that Mr. Pitt did not make Lord Grenville's admission into the Cabinet a "fine quâ non," of his returning into office. Now, I apprehend, that it may be shewn from the very words of the "Accurate Observer" himself, that the fact was so.

One would think, indeed, that there was an odium necessarily attached to this same "fine quâ non;" for the "Observer," in the very next page, endeavours to fix something like it on Mr. Addington: he says, the negotiation terminated because Mr. Addington "*ultimately* declared, that nothing could induce him to "afford even the chance of admitting Lord Grenville into the Cabinet." This, indeed, seems dextrously enough, but clearly enough, thrown out for the purpose of fixing the blame of the failure in this negotiation on Mr. Addington. But, I will ask, of what consequence was it to the negotiation that Mr. Addington, first or last, had determined not to admit Lord Grenville into the Cabinet, if Mr. Pitt had not made that admission a "fine quâ non."*

There is yet indeed some obscurity hanging over this. I have heard of letters circulated in explanation of this transaction as coming from Mr. Pitt, but of these I can say nothing. One

* Plain Answer, p. 27.

fact however I know, and it is such a one as cannot be immaterial. Towards the end of the negotiation, Mr. Pitt being then at Walmer, Lord Grenville went down and spent five or six days with him ; and it was only when Mr. Pitt returned to town after this visit, that the admission of the Grenville's into office was insisted upon as the condition of his resuming the administration.*

There next follows a laboured and a long argument intended to shew, that for any thing that Lord Grenville had done, Mr. Addington ought not to have objected to his being taken in the Administration. This, I apprehend, may be dispatched in a few words.

* There are many more points in the Plain Answer, as to which we are left in a state of uncertainty. It should seem as if the gentlemen who wrote it were too witty for plain matter of fact. To follow them, is like running after a "Will of the Wisp." The moment we think that we are arriving at the truth, the light suddenly vanishes, and we are left to grope our way in the dark. One cannot help wishing that Jupiter himself would emerge from behind his satellites and dispel the cloud. One feels inclined to say,

Δος οφθαλμοισιν ιδεσαι,

Εν δὲ φαι και ολισσων, σπει νυ τοι ευαδεν ουτως.

The Reader here will bear in mind that other ingenious Pamphlet, which is regularly announced in the Papers, as "being the subject of conversation," and "written by Mr. Robert Ward, Member for Cocker-mouth."—(See Morning Post of Feb. 2.)

First,

First, I apprehend, it must be allowed, that some important and serious differences existed between Lord Grenville and Mr. Addington upon great political questions : for, unless such a difference existed, how was Lord Grenville justified in withdrawing his support from Ministry ; and if they did exist, can there be a more sufficient reason why they should not act together ?

But, it is argued, “ as the war now appeared “ inevitable, it could no longer be an objection “ that Lord Grenville’s disposition was too war-like :”—this too admits of an answer. It might not, upon a supposition that the war was to last for ever ; but I suppose that every Ministry looks to a peace at some time or other. When a peace was again to be negotiated, pray whose ideas were to be followed ? For, upon this subject, the gentlemen might be “ far as “ the poles asunder ;” or must Lord Grenville and Mr. Pitt again go out, in order that Mr. Addington may negotiate : or will they borrow a hint from Mr. Windham, to teach them how to be accommodating upon such occasions ?

We now come to a part of Lord Grenville’s defence, which I was glad to see. I congratulate very much Mr. Canning (or whoever is the “ More “ Accurate Observer,”) upon the discovery which has been made, somewhat late indeed, that “ the
“ use

“ use of expressions, more harsh and severe than
 “ the occasion justifies on which they are ap-
 “ plied, is always objectionable :” that “ it often
 “ manifests ill humour, and always bad taste.”
 If Mr. Canning himself be not the writer of
 this, I recommend it seriously to his considera-
 tion, as well as to that of his late friend Mr.
 William Cobbett, who every week treats us with
 such a plentiful combination of this same “ ill
 “ humour” and “ bad taste.”

It is indeed at present understood, that Mr.
 Canning no longer lends his assistance to the
 Political Register, since that publication ven-
 tured to allot to Mr. Pitt a share of that cen-
 sure which Mr. Canning would have reserved
 exclusively for Mr. Addington. Still, however,
 the effects of his labours continue to be felt.
 The Editor, who is no man of wit himself, in
 default of a more regular supply from Mr.
 Windham, supports himself with the scraps
 which he picked up from his former associate.
 “ The Doctor” and “ the strait waistcoat,” his
 “ pills” and “ bolusses,” are pretty regularly
 brought forward every week, to remind us of
 the time when Mr. Canning shone forth, as
 what the “ Near Observer” calls him “ a hero
 “ of squibs and epigrams, a leader of doggrel
 “ and lampoon, a power in the war of invective
 “ and

“ and abuse, an instrument of Mr. Windham,
 “ an auxiliary of Cobbett.”

Perhaps some charitable friend may have reminded Mr. Canning, that Mr. Pitt, when he first took the lead in Administration, was treated with the same variety of abuse, with that mixture of wit and dulness, low scurrility, and pointed raillery, which some people think themselves justified in venting, without any discrimination, upon all who are their opponents in politics. He may have been put in mind too, that nothing which he has written, in point of wit and humour, equals the *Rolliad* and *Probationary Odes* : and he cannot but know, that, notwithstanding all that could be done by the greatest masters of ridicule, Mr. Pitt continued in office seventeen years, every year more fixed ; and was at last turned out only by himself.

If these and such considerations shall have made their due impression upon Mr. Canning, and given him to understand that where the characters or the measures of men are concerned, a page of sound sense is often worth, in point of effect as well as of morality, whole volumes of abuse and raillery, I shall think it a fortunate circumstance. I cannot, however, by this new light which has broken in upon him, or the “ more accurate Observer,” discern that “ the
 “ harsh

“harsh and uncivil” * (we may say, virulent) language of Lord Grenville is not to be taken into the account, when the propriety of his being associated in the Administration with Mr. Addington, is considered.

It is not that “harsh expressions in debate” are quite unpardonable:—Not that, or much more, is quite, or in any degree “unpardonable.” I have however always understood, that, according to the perfect law of ethics, repentance is to precede any claim to forgiveness: and I do not find that Lord Grenville has repented, or is not disposed to repeat the same harsh language. But indeed this need not be insisted upon: for, particularly upon the subject of politics, nay all other, it must be said that obduracy is not the vice of the Nation. We are a very forgiving people: and when I see Mr. Fox, after all that he has said, after all that he has done, in the cause of our enemies, and the enemies of social order; even now that he continues to be the advocate of Bonaparte; not only endured, but complimented and heard with favour in the House of Commons, nay pointed out, by those from whom we should least have expected it, as a fit person to be one of the favours of the Nation at this crisis, I am lost in admiration of that

* Plain Answer, p. 29, 30.

good-nature or cullibility, for which my 'poor Country, in her character of John Bull, has at all times been distinguished. *

I cannot indeed admit that the instances which the "accurate Observer" has alleged of Mr. Tierney and Mr. Sheridan, in any degree apply to the case of Lord Grenville: for, in the first place, Mr. Sheridan is not in office, and the situation in which Mr. Tierney is placed, is far inferior to that which was asked for Lord Grenville. He indeed properly comes in as an "accession" to the Administration, not as an original or leading member of it. But there remains yet another striking difference. These Gentlemen were in long habits of opposition to Mr. Pitt as well as Mr. Addington, there was therefore nothing in their language but what might be looked

* Even while I am writing this, out comes that other Pamphlet, which I have before noticed, a "*Verbosa et Grandis Epistola*," from another friend of Mr. Pitt, styling himself, a "Member of Parliament." To the very extraordinary and questionable assertions made in that publication I have not time to pay particular attention: I hope most of them are already anticipated and answered. But I mention it here on account of the direct reference which is made in the conclusion of it to Mr. Fox, as to one of the saviours of the Country:—"Mr. Fox's mind is of the very first class! it is *dreadful*" (observe *dreadful*; all the machinations of Bonaparte are nothing to it, *dreadful*!) "to think that the whole of this ability (that of the Opposition benches) is excluded from the Cabinet."

for :

for ;• nothing in fact exclusively directed to Mr. Addington : on the contrary, they had both of them much softened, I may say, even dropped their opposition in favour of him. As to the pleasantry alluded to, Mr. Sheridan was in that instance particularly “labouring in his vocation,” there was real wit in it ; the very *scurrility* of it made it harmless ;* it set all sides of the House in a roar, and gave nobody any pain. But is not this something materially different from the case of a person who takes a sudden and direct turn ; who from being a friend and associate becomes all at once, and from what are conceived to be very inadequate causes, a violent enemy and opponent. Has Mr. Canning, or the “ accurate Observer,” to learn, that to be deserted by those who have promised support, in even common cases, ranks as among the marked calamities of life : still more, when we are treated with contempt and insult by those from whom we looked to receive only good offices.

But, in truth, it was not a few or many “harsh expressions” only of Lord Grenville, which rendered him, in the opinion of Mr. Addington, a

* Observe now the laboured Comments of the “ Member of Parliament” upon this ridiculous jest ; with his laudable anxiety in favour of a certain part which he considers as unfairly dealt with.—*View of the Relative Situations*, &c. p. 10.

very unfit person to be associated with him in the Administration. It was the whole tenour of his conduct, it was his declared disposition, which nobody has ever yet alleged was, or is in any degree, altered: it was the effect which it was feared the association of Lord Grenville might have had upon the minds of the People. It might have rendered the sincerity of Ministers suspected in every act of their Administration. After all, what need is there of so many words? Has not the "more accurate Observer" himself stated, that Lord Grenville had entered into a *systematic* opposition? We have heard of systems which may be accommodated to any particular purpose, but we are not told that Lord Grenville's was of that nature; and who ever thought a man blameable, because he declined to undertake, without absolute necessity, the reconciling of opposite systems?

Surely, under all these circumstances, the wonder is not that Mr. Addington should have declined to act with Lord Grenville, but that Lord Grenville or any one else should have entertained the idea of proposing such a junction. It is to me a great wonder that Mr. Pitt could have brought himself to mention it, at a time when he was receiving such a proof of Mr. Addington's entire friendship and confidence: it does seem to me that Mr. Pitt had not for an instant
taken

taken into his consideration what Mr. Addington's feelings upon the subject must be: it does seem to me that he never looked into his own bosom, or asked himself how he would have felt if such a proposal had been made to him under the same circumstances. For, I will ask, what would have been the case, if Mr. Addington had agreed to Lord Grenville and Lord Spencer's returning into office? Would it not have had the appearance of most decidedly pronouncing judgment against himself, as to all the great points upon which there had been a difference? Would not that respectable bell-wether, Mr. Cobbett, and all the rest of the party, have echoed without ceasing, that now it was plain that all that they had advanced was but too true: that Mr. Addington, after making a dishonourable and precarious Peace, and provoking (as they now most consistently say) a return of War, was fain to acknowledge his folly, and fly for assistance to those Gentlemen whose advice he had so obstinately rejected.

This was the enviable situation into which Mr. Pitt was so resolutely bent upon forcing his old and tried friend: observe too, that no such conclusions could be drawn against Lord Grenville. By continuing out of place his Lordship incurred no disgrace: he might stay where he was, and neither he nor any body else be the worse for it.

For

For however some people, and Lord Grenville among the rest, may insist that the Country cannot be saved without the assistance of Mr. Pitt, I never heard any such assertion made with respect to Lord Grenville.

There only remains to be noticed one other proposition of the "accurate Observer," upon which if Mr. Pitt rests his case, all that has been said or written becomes quite superfluous.— "Surely," says he, "it was for Mr. Pitt to appreciate the talents and qualifications of those with whom he was to risk his character, and to consider upon what terms he would return into office consistently with his own credit, and the public interest. None can question his right to determine that point for himself.* To this I answer, Certainly : but then allow to Mr. Addington the same liberty of judgment as to the terms upon which he would resign : but then, as I said before, what becomes of this Appeal to the Public ? For what purpose is all this waste of words ? What has made this discussion necessary, but that Mr. Pitt's friends asserted that he had reason on his side, and undertook to prove it ?

We come now to what is stated as the last head, viz. "The conduct of these persons in Parliament," that is, of Mr. Pitt, Lord Grenville, and Mr. Windham. I have before said that the question with respect to each of them stands upon diffe-

different and distinct grounds : and, indeed, in considering the three first points, Mr. Windham's name hardly came to be mentioned. His situation in the Cabinet was subordinate ; his going out of office was at the time hardly thought worthy of particular notice ; nor has it ever been enquired whether he gave any promise of support to the present Ministers : and as to the Negotiation with Mr. Pitt, he seems not to have been in the contemplation of either party. He is not, I believe, supposed (except by one person with whom he has almost identified himself) to be one of those characters, without whose aid the Country cannot be saved. Yet certainly the very particular and pointed manner in which he has set himself in opposition, not merely to Ministers, but to the sentiments of the Nation at large, will hardly permit any person who writes upon public subjects at this moment, to pass him by in silence. Of the nature and grounds of his opposition, as well as Lord Grenville's, I shall therefore have something to say when I come to the charges which are so loudly made by a few persons against the present Ministers, as if they were void of all talent, and totally incapable of directing the affairs of this kingdom. I shall, however, first dispatch what I have to say of Mr. Pitt.

What my objection is, what I believe Mr. Ad-
dington's

dington's objection to be to this Gentleman's conduct in Parliament, may, I think, very clearly be collected from what I have already laid down. It is not, I should say perhaps (for as to his present conduct there is hardly a question) *it has not been* friendly ; it has not been cordial, not such as shewed a continuance of that friendship and good-will which Mr. Addington had a right to expect. His support has not been even that which an indifferent person coming into office under such circumstances, and pursuing the same line of conduct, would have been entitled to claim: still less was it that, which was due to a man who had been his intimate friend and companion for so many years, who had gone along with him in every public measure, and in the very act of taking office, was plainly doing an act of friendship.

When I say too that it was not friendly, not what it ought to have been, I should add, that perhaps this consisted more in the manner than in the matter, in the countenance than in the words. I must however except from this, the line which was taken upon Mr. Patten's motion for censure, and which certainly approached as near to direct hostility, as it was possible, without a total disregard of consistency. I should also except that, which indeed was considered by every one who heard it, as an unequivocal avowal
of

of a change in his sentiments towards Mr. Addington; the ungracious substitution of the words, "Right Hon. Gentleman," for those of "Right Hon. Friend;" and which, if I am not mistaken, first took place in the debate on the Address. This might indeed have been put to the score of manner only, if these expressions were not commonly received in Parliament as denoting the Party of the individual rather than personal attachment. But, exclusive of these two particulars, I know not that Mr. Pitt, if he had been so minded, might not have done all that he has done in the House of Commons without any material injury to the connection subsisting between him and Mr. Addington. The points upon which he differed were not of such magnitude, but that the difference might have been suffered to exist, and been in such a manner declared, as to cause no separation or even coolness between them. But this was evidently what Mr. Pitt, for some reason or other, was not at all studious of avoiding, and the natural consequence could be no other than what has happened, that the breach should become wider every day, till they should come at last to be as far asunder as Mr. Pitt's new friends could wish.

But now, as to this motion of Mr. Patten's, let us examine a little what it was, and what necessity could exist for Mr. Pitt to act as he did.

Here was a motion very much at length, containing a heavy censure upon Ministers for almost every thing they had done, or indeed had not done, since the Definitive Treaty. To this Mr. Pitt declared that he could not give his assent, because, though he did not approve the whole of the conduct of Ministers, yet he was not prepared to go the full length of that censure; because also he thought the motion improper, at a juncture when the defence of the Country required the whole time and attention of Parliament; and therefore he declined voting with either his old friend or the Opposition, but moved the Order of the Day. Unquestionably this was looked upon as a measure of hostility towards Mr. Addington, for it conveyed censure, though not in express terms; nay, in the declared grounds upon which his conduct was rested, a degree of censure was absolutely expressed. If Mr. Pitt had not wished to be so understood, if he had really meant to continue that support to Ministry which at first he had given, and which he was engaged to give, why not negative the motion? The mere negating of such a motion was no unqualified approbation of Ministers; he might conscientiously have done it; and yet retained the sentiments which he professed, upon his merely shewing the motion of Mr. Patten was improper; why then be hunting after distinctions and qualifications for

for his vote? Surely, in the course of his political life, Mr. Pitt must have often supported his friends in cases where there was full as much room for scruples of conscience as in this. But indeed it must not be forgot, that nothing positive was required of him; he was only asked to join in negating a motion which, as he himself allowed, was in the extent proposed unfounded, and farther objectionable as being ill-timed.

It is no wonder then if the opinion of men in general was not very favourable to a morality so extremely delicate and questionable; it drew forth a Philippic (upon peculiar grounds indeed) from Mr. Cobbet, which occasioned the withdrawing of Mr. Canning from the Firm of the House. But, besides, persons of more moderation could not but see that this was evidently seeking a quarrel with Mr. Addington, and a step towards the total desertion of that promise which had hitherto been kept more "to the ear" than "to the hope."

But as a justification of Mr. Pitt's conduct, and as an impeachment, I suppose, of the sincerity of Mr. Addington, we are told that Mr. Pitt* "may have thought differently from Mr. Addington on points of finance, on foreign affairs, on the communications with Bona-

* Plain Answer, p. 52.

“ parte:” that he may “ have communicated these opinions, *or at least some of them*, to his Majesty’s Ministers; and he may have found that they were either rejected as ill-founded, or unattended to altogether.”—We are told farther, that as to Mr. Pitt’s opposition on the Property Tax Bill, he had, through the channel of some intimate friends, previously made known to Mr. Addington the view he had taken of the subject, and that he only brought forward his opposition when he found his remonstrance disregarded.

With regard to the first of these propositions, as it contains no positive averment, as we know not which of these opinions (for it appears to be only *some at least*) were expressed, I hardly know what answer can be given. I confess, however, that in this instance also, I feel very much tempted to desire the Gentlemen who wrote the “ Plain Answer” to be more explicit. I will ask, will Mr. Long, or any of the Gentlemen who assist him, undertake to point out any one measure of Administration (particularly as to our foreign affairs), of which Mr. Pitt, previous to the 10th of December, 1802, ever in any manner, or to any person, particularly to Mr. Addington, stated his disapprobation?

As to the other of these propositions it is observable, that it was such a regulation as Mr.

Pitt

Pitt and Mr. Addington might well have differed upon as friends, if Mr. Pitt could so have differed from Mr. Addington. With respect to the merits of the question, they are not very material on this point. If I were to allow Mr. Pitt to be more practised as a financier than Mr. Addington, I do not know that I should injure the cause of the latter, or at all hurt his feelings. The truth is, however, that I have heard many persons find fault with these amendments to the original measure, and attribute to them most of the difficulty which they find in executing the bill as it now stands.

A word more as to this. Mr. Addington's yielding upon this point, is much argued upon as a proof of weakness and indecision ; as if in the first instance he captiously refused to yield to Mr. Pitt, though afterwards he found himself unable to maintain his point. The fact is, first, that Mr. Pitt was irregular in his motion, in the manner in which he brought forward the question : it was, in truth, *he* that was captious. Secondly, Mr. Addington's giving way was *really* occasioned by the very gentlemen who voted with him against Mr. Pitt, and who came to him and urged him to grant the exemptions in favour of the small farmers who composed a great part of the yeomanry. After all, is it for Mr. Pitt or his friends to take the modification
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of a tax as a proof of weakness? Have they forgot the numberless instances of the kind by which Mr. Pitt's administration seemed as it were to be distinguished? Taxes, proposed, withdrawn, modified, relinquished, reduced, extended, enacted, and repealed? Shop tax, maid-servants' tax, glove tax, and how many other taxes? Mr. Sheridan, so early as 1792, (Feb. 17,) characterised that administration, as one that "went on arming and disarming, taxing and untaxing; who committed so many blunders, that they were for ever making atonement; who broke our heads that they might give us a plaister."

As to what is said in another place of Mr. Pitt's disapproving of the statement given by Mr. Addington of our finances, no great stress will be laid upon that by those who remember the different statements brought before Parliament from year to year, by different financiers, in absolute opposition to each other, yet all of them plausible, and not easy to be confuted.

I cannot, however, dismiss this without one observation. If Mr. Addington's statement of the 10th of December, 1802, was wrong, why has it not been contradicted? Mr. Gregor, a friend of Mr. Pitt's, gave notice of a motion on the subject and abandoned it. No attempt has been made to invalidate it in the only regular way.

way. But, says the " Plain Answer," " Mr. Pitt may have thought it of little avail to revise or to comment upon a statement made in contemplation of peace, when war had been declared." Indeed ! Do financial statements then change their nature according to circumstances ? Is this Mr. Pitt's doctrine ? I should have thought that if the statement was erroneous, the declaration of war only increased the propriety, nay, the necessity of its being rectified. Surely the call for new burthens only made it more requisite to ascertain the true extent and effect of the old. This is, indeed, mere evasion. If only such arguments are brought forward, we may indeed well give some credit to the " Near Observer," in his suggestion that " Mr. Addington's ability and success" constitute the whole of his crime in the eyes of Mr. Pitt and his friends.

After all, the point most material to the present question is, whether the manner in which Mr. Pitt brought forward his opposition to the measure does not shew a departure from the system of support upon which he set out. I neither join with the Near Observer in all that he has said of Mr. Pitt's opposition, nor can I allow to the other gentleman, what he would have understood, that Mr. Addington's not following Mr. Pitt's advice or intimation, afforded
a just

a just cause for hostility. And indeed, how might all this tend to confirm the opinion advanced by some persons, of Mr. Pitt's expecting that he should govern under the name of Mr. Addington, when we find so much stress laid on Mr. Addington's retaining his own sentiments in preference to Mr. Pitt's. Observe too, how Mr. Pitt's ideas upon this weighty subject were communicated—through the channel of third persons—"intimate friends," it is said: but were not Mr. Pitt and Mr. Addington intimate friends? And how ceased that intimacy? Why not communicate directly? I will add, can a measure of ~~finance~~ ^{finance}, which is in its nature complicated, be discussed through third persons? After all, why could they not, as I have said before, retain each their particular sentiments without offence? In all this, one sees a jealousy and distrust which on the face of it is suspicious, one may trace the precautions taken beforehand to prepare a justification for his conduct, which all strongly speak a deliberate intention in Mr. Pitt of withdrawing his support, of breaking off his old connections. This was indeed but what I had foreseen and mentioned. From the moment that Mr. Pitt could bring himself to stipulate for the advancement of Lord Grenville, at the expense of Mr. Addington's honour and reputation, it was plain, that from that moment, he
would

would cease to look upon Mr. Addington as his friend. He must feel that he had treated him as no friend should treat another; and after that, the progress is almost inevitable to reserve, distrust, aversion, and lastly, open hostility.

With regard to those other opinions of Mr. Pitt, which he may or may not have communicated to Mr. Addington, they have probably some connection with what I am now proceeding to consider, that is, the charges which are brought against the present ministers, and how far they are decent or proper in the mouths of those from whom they come.

I speak this, be it observed, more particularly as to our foreign relations: for, as I before remarked, as to our internal government, no man will say but that it goes on full as smoothly as under Mr. Pitt's administration; nay, it is notorious that, happily for Mr. Addington and the country, it meets with much less obstruction.

We come then to those great measures of external policy which have so provoked the indignation of Lord Grenville and Lord Spencer, or Mr. Windham and Mr. Cobbett, not forgetting Mr. Canning and a few others of Mr. Pitt's friends.

The first of those, and the root of all, is the Preliminary Treaty: for it was from that time that a systematic and determined opposition was

not only entered into by Lord Grenville; but solemnly declared and avowed by him, and that in the most formal and pointed manner.

I may well claim to be impartial in this respect, because I scruple not to say that I was not one of the many who approved of it; that, at the time, I could most heartily have wished it had not been made; although, as to my own private interests nothing could be more convenient, yet I solemnly declare, that I have, since that, had abundant reason to doubt the goodness of my judgment; that, with all that has been said by opposition against it, with the renewal of the war which has followed, I do now think that it has been a beneficial measure to the country. I will even advance what may appear to many persons a paradox: I do think that all that accession of territory and seeming power which has been acquired by Bonaparte, and which yet is unequal to the satisfying of his rapacity, all his successful encroachments and usurpations, since the first of October, 1801, have added little or nothing to the stability of republican *France*. They have increased the terror and hatred of the Nations; they have taken off even the tattered remnants of that hypocrisy, by which, at the beginning of the Revolution these pretended sons of liberty covered their real designs; and though at this moment the whole
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Continent seems cowering under the talons of this spoiler, it only waits for the first reverse, for perhaps the failure of the expedition against this country, to rise up with increased vengeance against that power which is now so openly declared the common enemy of mankind.

I do not say that these are or were events to be speculated upon, so as to influence the ministry to give away what they might safely have retained. It may be, I will admit it, for the sake of the argument; and as a Christian, I even rejoice in the admission (the more so, as it is big with hope for the future) that this is all the working of Providence for its own wise ends; and that nothing of it entered into the calculations of human wisdom. But when things have turned out well, (and, whatever Mr. Windham may say, they have turned out well) it is not usual to quarrel with those who have brought it about.

In this respect let me explain myself. I should have thought the peace a perfectly good one if we had retained Malta. But, according to the best of my observation, much the majority of the kingdom would have been greatly dissatisfied if we had continued the war for that object only. Now, we are in possession of that most important acquisition, with the conduct of ministers in that

respect fully justified in the eyes of the nation at large.

And this leads me to consider the principal and most important advantage which the peace has procured for us. It has produced such an unanimity in the country; has been the cause of such general and wonderful exertions, as I believe, no other circumstance could or would have brought about. And they are exertions of such a sort, that the effect of them will not end with the occasion which brought them forth; but they will stand a monument to posterity of the ability of this country to repel every attack, and to look with indifference upon every threat of invasion.

Here let me go back once more, to the "Projet" at Lisle. It was, upon its failure, declared by the then ministers, that they were glad it had failed; but that they had been led into it by the wishes which then prevailed in the nation for peace. Let it be observed then, that they adopted a measure, which in their better judgment they thought wrong, out of mere deference to the popular cry; and let that weigh something when next Mr. Cobbett or Mr. Windham declaim about the necessity of government leading the sense of the country, and not being led by it. But now, that the cry for peace, if more loud, was not more general, in 1797 than
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in 1801, I distinctly aver, and hope to make plain, the only difference is, that in 1797, Mr. Fox (Mr. Windham's honourable friend, as he is returned to be,) vented his clamours in Parliament; whereas, in 1801 they were confined to the Whig Club, and such seminaries of sedition and disaffection.

If then, the same motives existed for negotiating in 1801 as in 1797, if the terms in either case were so little different, as at least to require some subtlety to distinguish materially between them, is there any cause for such violent and loud clamour, for such unqualified abuse, as the present ministry have on that account incurred? May we not rather say, that in the motives which led to it, as well as in other respects, the "Projet" at Lisle, is a precedent in point for the Treaty of Amiens?

Let me now say a word as to the desire of peace which prevailed in 1801, and which grew up into a strong expectation upon Mr. Addington's coming into power. Somehow or other the idea had got about, that he was a likely man to accomplish that object. I shall first observe, that the declarations made by the last ministers, of their rejoicing at the failure of the Treaty at Lisle, had given some grounds for people, otherwise not well intentioned towards them, to tax them with insincerity. I say not that there was any
real

real ground for this ; but so it was : and certainly it was generally apprehended that it was not likely they would turn their thoughts that way, or that the enemy would readily treat with them. The accession of a new minister was therefore considered as auguring favourably for the return of peace ; and I desire only to appeal to the papers of that day, and even to the *Porcupine*, for that fact. Hardly a paper came out that had not some conjecture on the subject ; and Mr. Cobbett took particular pains (pains which cannot otherwise be accounted for) to point out what kind of peace alone ought to be made.

Need I appeal to what passed on the signing of the preliminaries ? Consider only those demonstrations of joy which extorted such bitter Philippics in Cobbett's Register, against the " peace-loving people of England." In that publication language has been almost exhausted in invectives against the people for their approbation of the peace : even very lately it stated nine-tenths of the people to be devoted to that side of the question.* But let us also consider what passed afterwards, and we shall see further and more unequivocal proofs, that nothing

* This was so manifest, that Lord Temple himself, probably because as a county member, he did not think it quite safe at once to contradict the opinions of his constituents, in the first instance, gave his assent to the preliminaries.

could

could be more decided than the cry of the nation for peace. In the interval between the Preliminaries and Definitive Treaty, Bonaparte possessed himself of the island of Elba, procured himself to be elected President of the Cisalpine Republic, and took other measures for his aggrandizement. Did those circumstances, which undoubtedly would have warranted a renewal of the war, produce any change in the public opinion? Was the ministry called upon to break off the negotiation? By no means. Peace was still desired, and, when it came, was received with joy. But let us go further still: when the peace was concluded, Bonaparte went on extending his power; other territories were added to his empire, and even his designs against this country began to unfold themselves; did, even then, the nation call for war? Not a voice was heard, not a syllable to that effect, except from those who had been in the constant habit of opposing the treaty. But this is not all: after the full manifestation of Bonaparte's hostile (nay, irreconcilably hostile) spirit to this country, have we not seen Mr. Pitt and Mr. Fox join together in urging ministers to enter again into treaty, under the mediation of Russia? Yes, I say, and after this Mr. Pitt can talk of improper concessions to Bonaparte!!!

These are strong proofs, and be it observed,
that

that I adduce them only as proofs, unquestionable proofs, how decided and how general was the wish of the nation for peace. If to such a wish, so plainly and so loudly pronounced, it was a weakness in the present ministers to give way, (and whether it was or not, I am not now arguing) still it little becomes those persons to exclaim so strongly against their conduct, to mark it with such virulent abuse, who themselves, in the case of the "Projet" at Lille, who in another instance, which I shall presently notice, and one of the greatest importance, themselves set the example of yielding, not to the expression only, but even to the apprehension of a similar wish?

And this leads me to consider the charges which have lately been made against ministers for not having met the hostile spirit of Bonaparte, in a sufficiently spirited manner. It has even been said, that the war might have been avoided by a different conduct. As to this last proposition, I cannot persuade myself that it is urged seriously; if it be believed by any one, I am sure that I should think it in vain to argue with such a man, upon any point which is connected with the measures of Bonaparte. No man, I must think, can seriously believe it; for in precipitating the war, even when he did, it is plain enough that he acted contrary to his own interest.

interest. The same irritability and violence of ambition, if it had been met by equal irritability and violence, or even (let it be said) more decided opposition, would only have produced the war so much sooner, without perhaps the same unanimity in the country to encounter it. With what grace, indeed, this imputation can be cast against ministers by those, who, during the whole period that peace continued, were unceasingly inculcating the absolute necessity of war, let the consistent Mr. Cobbett explain.

But how, if the peace had been prolonged? Would our situation have been mended? Not a jot, according to these very gentlemen. Not a jot, I believe, every body now will say, after what has come out of the disposition and designs of Bonaparte. Could he have dissembled but a few months, he would have been in possession of Malta. Does any body believe that, once in possession of that, he would have delayed his designs upon Egypt, or abandoned that system of hostilities, which he could not help anticipating in the publication of Sebastiani's mission, even at the risk of losing that island?

As for my own part, I profess not to have seen, not to see now, in the papers which have been published, that "manner" on the part of our ministers, "which was more likely to encourage and to incite, than to counteract and

“ resist, the hostile spirit of Bonaparte.”* The conduct and language of our government appeared to me, not the less dignified for being uniformly moderate and guarded. The fact is, the experiment of peace was made; (all peace unfortunately, in our days more especially, is but experiment, and this being with so novel a government, must be peculiarly so) the experiment then being made, it was to have a fair trial. Administration, therefore, was not to make every irregular or improper demand of Bonaparte an occasion of war: but these demands were resisted with firmness, and, I will say, with dignity. Had those nations, whose interests were more particularly affected by it, been disposed to assist the Swiss, it is clear that our ministers would not have been backward; and they sufficiently shewed what they would have done, had the proper occasion presented itself. But to have gone to war for Switzerland, when its liberties were actually gone, and with all the powers of the Continent acquiescing in the usurpations of Bonaparte, might have been very chivalrous and gallant, but would not have been thought very wise: nor do I know that this reasoning, if good, when applied to Switzerland, will be bad when applied to Piedmont, or to any other the encroachments of France, on either Continent.

* Plain Answer, p. 52.

I will go farther. I do think that the temper and forbearance of ministers, during the course of the negociation, are instances of real and solid wisdom on their part. Contemplating, as they must have done, the almost certain return of war, it was of most essential consequence that they should appear to the people of this country not to have been the cause of even hastening its approach; that by no intemperance of language or of measures, they should give any handle for doubting of their sincerity, as to the maintenance of peace. Now to have been able to endure, not only the irritating conduct of the French government, but the violent reproaches and variety of abuse which was cast upon them in this country, on account of their supposed abject submission to Bonaparte, shews a firmness and constancy of mind, which is a most prominent, and perhaps the most difficult, part of wisdom. Weak minds are easily irritated; they are impatient of obloquy, however unmerited, and that irritability and impatience disables them from waiting for, or making the proper use of such favourable circumstances as are not immediately present.

Those who are old enough, may remember what advantage Mr. Pitt derived from similar forbearance, at his first entrance into office in 1782. He stood the brunt of Mr. Fox's oppo-

sition, of all his Philippics and violent motions, backed by a majority of the House of Commons, to the great hindrance even of public business : he stood it apparently unmoved ; nor would he (though pressed by the Grenville's to do it) dissolve the Parliament, until the moment came that, by his perseverance, he had broken Mr. Fox's majorities, and saw the great body of the nation heartily and decidedly with him.

This is not the time, nor is there room now, for a laboured defence of ministry, upon all the points, upon which they have been attacked ; but some notice must be taken of that other head, upon which the " More Accurate Observer" has rested in making Mr. Pitt's apology. That gentleman, he says, "*may* have thought " that the necessary steps to conciliate foreign " powers had been omitted, that alliances had " been neglected."* It might have been well if Mr. Pitt's apologist had been so good as to tell us what foreign powers he means, what alliances he alludes to. One would suppose that there was something in the conduct of the war, when carried on by Mr. Pitt, which shewed that there was no difficulty in all this, that the circumstances of the Continent were such, as to be at least favourable to the making of such connec-

* Plain Answer, p. 52.

tions. One would be led to think at least, that some of these foreign powers had been alienated, some alliances broken, since Mr. Pitt went out of office. But now, what is the fact? Even in the *Porcupine*,* the paper of the outrageous Mr. Cobbett, the state of the country at the time, when Mr. Addington came into administration, was represented to be such that, according to him, "we appeared, as it were, a nation devoted "to destruction;" "deserted by our allies, the "world combining or combined against us."

I shall be told, perhaps, that this is taking Cobbett at a disadvantage. Like Benedict in the play, when he spoke too much in favour of Mr. Addington, "he did not think that he "should live to be in opposition." But let us hear what a correspondent of his, in the Political Register, and one whose opinions he refers to with great commendations, has told us, only so late as the end of July last: speaking of the last war, he says, "During the course of it, we lost "our allies, one after another. The King of "Prussia most basely forsook us. The Dutch, "most fatally for their interest and indepen- "dence, threw themselves into the arms of "France. Spain, after a few feeble efforts, "joined the conqueror. The intrigues of the

* See *Porcupine* of April 20, 1801.

“ Italian powers vanished before French fero-
 “ city. Some of the smaller states had been
 “ blotted out of existence, and others have risen
 “ upon their ruins. Russia, after making a con-
 “ siderable impression upon France, withdrew
 “ from the common alliance, and was only pre-
 “ vented by the sudden death of her sovereign
 “ from turning her arms against us. And the
 “ Emperor of Germany, our only valuable and
 “ best-tryed ally, forced by a train of defeats, to
 “ conclude a treaty in which we were not com-
 “ prehended. Thus, after a series of events,
 “ which have no parallel, partly occasioned by
 “ ill-judged policy, perfidy, and weakness, on
 “ the one hand; and by a spirit of enthu-
 “ siasm, ambition, irresistible power, and asto-
 “ nishing success on the other, we found our-
 “ selves deserted by our allies, and left to main-
 “ tain the combat alone.”

When we consider that all these events, all
 this desertion, took place during Mr. Pitt's ad-
 ministration, backed by all the fortitude and all
 the wisdom of Lord Grenville, I would ask what
 reason have either of these gentlemen to impute
 to the present ministry our want of allies? Have
 they shewn us an example how alliances are to
 be preserved, much less how they are to be re-
 covered?

The truth is, and they know it, the whole
 Continent

Continent is now basely crouching and trembling at the feet of Bonaparte. The different powers will do any thing rather than provoke him. I except not the North of Germany ; for how else would Bonaparte have ventured to enter into that quarter with his armies, and to lay waste one of the members of the German Empire, but the other day guaranteed as such, not merely by the Emperor of Germany and Prussia, but even by the Emperor of Russia ? Would it be endured by any potentates but such as are wholly lost to a sense of honour, as well as blind to their real interests, that this usurper should levy contributions upon, and dictate terms to independent cities and states, at their very doors ? That he should occupy the banks of their rivers, and controul their navigation ? What is to be expected from nations or sovereigns so devoid of every generous feeling ? I was witness to something of the kind, even during the last war. Even then, the whole Continent was French, and spoke the language, I should say the jargon, and sentiments of France ; Austria, perhaps, excepted ; but the evil had not then risen to quite such an alarming height ; they were not then absolutely pinioned and gagged.

Of course, after this, I need hardly take notice of the terrible apprehensions brought forward by the “ Accurate Observer, that the whole Con-

“ tinent

“ tinent looks upon the case” of the rupture of the Peace of Amiens, “ as decidedly against us.” Poor souls ! would they venture to express a different opinion ? Is, however, this defender of Mr. Pitt aware, that if the opinion of this same Continent be taken, we shall as decidedly be constituted the aggressors in the last war ? And will he lay stress upon such opinions ? Is it to such judges as those that he appeals ?

The opinion which is of real consequence to this country, which alone can save or destroy it, is the *opinion of the people* themselves ; and I have shewn above, that by the wisdom and firmness of administration this has been so secured, the minds of every British subject have been so united, as to procure us the most ample security, as to remove from us almost the possibility of danger.

I impute it not to the last ministry as a fault, that they could not retain their allies. I am not sure that in their then temper and disposition they were worth retaining ; but I do impute it to them and their partisans, that they should make it a ground of attack against ministers, that they have not done that, which they themselves could not accomplish ; that they have not recovered what was, in fact, lost by their predecessors.

And yet, amidst all this, something has been
done

done by ministers; and whatever may be said of the late treaty with Sweden, yet one would think that that cannot be so very bad for us, which Bonaparte finds not to be good for him.* Yet there is a prospect of Russia feeling some shame for her supineness. Yet, while Hamburgh and Lubeck have been shut up, other channels for our commerce have been opened.

Let me now come to the transaction which I before hinted at, and let me in my turn (since in self-defence we must be critics also,) let me inquire a little more particularly into the claims of the late administration to superior wisdom and vigour in their negotiations with foreign powers. I shall carry back my reader to a period, it may be said, somewhat remote; it is, however, what, I believe, has had more influence upon the conduct of Prussia, and has contributed to its base desertion, and the turn which affairs have taken in the North, more than all that this ministry has done, or could do, if they were even as wicked and foolish as Cobbett represents them to be. The reasons why so little stress has been laid upon it, why it has been passed over in comparative silence, I will presently shew.

What I allude to is the Russian armament in 1791. Will it be believed, that this same admi-

* See *Moniteur* of

stration, which is cried up as so exclusively wise and penetrating, and, above all, so firm and vigorous, should not only have exposed itself to absolute derision and contempt, but committed a deliberate breach of faith? That it shrunk from engagements which it had contracted, out of pure fear lest a War should be unpopular, lest (shall I say it?) a clamour for Peace might shake them in their seats? What shall we say to their suffering his Majesty's Minister at a foreign Court to be elbowed, to be laughed at, to be completely put down by the Envoy of a Faction, sent to that Court, and received by it in professed opposition to the Counsels of our Sovereign.

Every Englishman will easily enter into the feelings of Lord Whitworth on this occasion. Never was mortification more complete. He had, by direction from our Court, held the most high and threatening language, and protested that War would be the immediate consequence of his Remonstrances not being attended to. Relying, however, upon the assurances given by *the Gentlemen on the other side*, the Russian Cabinet stood firm; and our great, our mighty, our vigorous Negotiators gave way. They did, indeed, shew some delicacy for Lord Whitworth; they did put it in his power to shut himself up, as he did, for six weeks; and sent Mr. Faulkener to make their apology to the Empress, and assure

sure her, I suppose, of their readiness to receive her future commands.

Mr. Fox and his friends, backed by Mr. Wilberforce, will, perhaps, still insist that Ochakoff was not an object for which we ought to go to war. Be it so ; but where then was the wisdom of Lord Grenville and Mr. Pitt to commit the Country for such an object ? Or why persist in it till they involved the Nation in high disgrace ?

The fact is, and, though not generally known, it is now no secret,* that our interposition respecting Ochakoff, was only part of a system concerted with the late King of Prussia, for the express purpose of preventing the partition of Poland. Most certain it is, and it was the opinion of Stanislaus himself,† that it was owing to Mr. Fox's opposition that he was stripped of his kingdom.

In retracting as we did, we left nothing for Prussia to do, but to take her part of the spoil : we gave her also an example of desertion, upon which she has amply improved.

All this applies with particular force to Lord Grenville. For let it be remembered, that the actual reason of that Noble Lord's coming into office was the refusal of the late Duke of Leeds

* See Doddsley's Annual Register for 1791.

† See also Eton's Survey of the Turkish Empire, 2d Edit. p. 436, 437.

to accede to this shameful and ignominious retraction. That Noble Duke had too much of the spirit of an Englishman to set his hand to dispatches which would so essentially tarnish the reputation of his Country. He would not "say and straight unsay." That was left for the then prudent, and pliant, and submissive, but now, above all, firm and vigorous, and magnanimous, Lord Grenville. Under such auspices did his Lordship enter into the Cabinet. Thus did he commence his career as Minister !

The reason why this disgraceful business has been in a manner hushed, is plain. Ministers felt that it was not honourable to them ; and the Opposition must have been equally conscious that a near examination into their conduct not only would not turn to their credit, but might affect their personal safety.*

* This, however, they did not immediately discover, or they trusted to the pusillanimity of Ministers. For one cannot but smile to see the " Pistols" and the " Nym's" of these times, not only kicked at the Court of Russia, but spit upon in the House of Commons, insulted by the very man who had brought this disgrace upon them. " What Court," (said Mr. Fox, speaking of the Ministers, in December 14, 1792) " What Court, he would ask, would be elevated by their promises, or intimidated by their menaces, after their timid conduct with respect to Russia ?" This to be sure was a long while ago ; and now, in 1804, Mr. Fox and Lord Grenville may, I suppose, notwithstanding all this form a Coalition.

It

It passed off, therefore, in this Country very quietly ; but the effect of it abroad was long felt ; and I verily believe that it has had an influence upon all the events which have of late years taken place in the North of Europe.

If then Lord Grenville, and Mr. Wyndham, if Mr. Pitt's friends, will still upbraid the present Administration for want of firmness, of wisdom, of talent, for having made an inglorious Peace ; I fear not to challenge a comparison ; and to defy them to shew me any thing in the last Peace half so inglorious, so disgraceful as this. Let any impartial person pronounce by which of the two transactions the national honour has been most tarnished. It will be found at least, if all that they say were true, that this Administration is not the only one that has yielded up the true interest, the glory of this country, to popular clamour, to the desire (if they make the accusation, unjust as it is, it must be retorted) of keeping their places.

When Lord Grenville next quarrels with the late or any future Northern Convention, let him be reminded what a noble opportunity then presented itself, and was thrown away, of making the Empress renounce all her schemes to the detriment of this country, of dissolving for ever every vestige of that armed neutrality which was so ungenerously raised up against this country in
the

the hour of her embarrassment, at a moment when we dared not resist. Being, as we were, at peace with other countries in 1791, she could not have stood a moment against us. From that contest, single handed, the firmness of Mr. Pitt and Lord Grenville shrunk back: they preferred even national disgrace: and now they modestly require the highest possible tone to be held when all the world is in a manner united against us.

That, however, we shall not long be without allies, I verily believe. The nations upon the Continent will very soon see the necessity of flying for refuge to that power, which alone has resisted the attacks, as well direct as indirect, of France. But after all that has passed, it is their business to come to us, and not ours to go to them. I believe that any appearance of eagerness on our part will rather retard than accelerate that general confederacy, which yet, perhaps, is not very distant. Let us not therefore solicit, not only the mediation of Russia (Mr. Fox and Mr. Pitt must both excuse me), but not even her alliance. To shew that we have a proper sense of our importance, will only make us the more sought after. Such is human nature and human politics.

When, however, the time shall again recur to treat for Peace, let me hope that we shall all be of one mind; that the whole Nation will see the
good

good policy as well as justice of retaining such conquests as may be not only essential to our security, but even of acknowledged advantage: * that we shall not suffer ourselves to be influenced by the interested or partial representations of those states who have tamely or selfishly left us to bear "the heat and burthen of the day," and would after that invidiously strip us of our earnings. Let them feel, that since they have obliged this Country to ascertain the extent of her powers, her ability to stand by herself, it is not for them to set bounds to her efforts, or limits to her acquisitions.

That our present Ministers are as likely to achieve this as any of those who are loudest in abuse against them, is what, I think, I have shewn to be at least probable. Some credit, I think, will be given them for vigour, by those who consider the blockade of the Elbe, the alarm which has been spread on the coasts of the enemy, our recaptures in the West Indies, and troops sent out, in the face of an army assembled on the opposite coast for the declared purpose of invasion, in such numbers and with such means as have never before been witnessed. I will say,

* It is not the last Peace that gives the first example of this Country restoring, from a misplaced generosity or a too great desire of peace, Conquests which, perhaps, ought to have been retained. Our history is full of such instances.

and

and I am sure it will be hereafter acknowledged, that not only in this Country, but in any other, never have such strong exertions been made in the first year of a war. After all the calumnies which have been advanced respecting the state of our fleets and our armies, regular and irregular, it is now found that our ships are in want of nothing, our regular army far from neglected, and our irregular force marshalled in such numbers, and in such a state of discipline, as are fully adequate to the occasion. To enter into detail would require a volume ; but I am persuaded, and indeed it appears plainly enough, that, let Gentlemen say what they will, the Country feels that it is not defenceless ; it is ready to declare that good provision has been made, that good provision is making for its protection, and for the assertion of its dignity and rank among Nations.

Among the accusations repeatedly made and repelled, is, that of Ministers having improvidently disarmed at the Peace, and left the Country defenceless. We are told too of their having held out expectations of Peace which were fallacious : but let any man look back to the debates in Parliament, to the Journals, he will find the fact to be, that not a man of the infantry (except foreigners) was disbanded, whom Ministers thought they could keep without a breach of good faith. From the very beginning, they prepared

pared the Country for an establishment unusually great. From the Journals of Parliament it will appear, that in fact our Peace Establishment was kept up to a height beyond all comparison. Contrast this (I would not wish to make the contrast, but it is forced upon me); contrast this with Mr. Pitt's conduct in 1792; the conduct of that man who is declared to be the only man capable of saving the Country.* In February 1792, when the train was actually laid which was to set fire to the four corners of Europe, he disbands soldiers, lessens the number of our seamen, he repeals taxes; he declares that "the moment of anxiety and solicitude is past;" that the Nation was at that time as likely to enjoy Peace for the period to which he looked forward (*fifteen years*) as at any time it had ever been. Is this the wisdom, the foresight, the blaze of sunshine, which quite puts out the feebler lights of the present Administration?

It remains for me now only to notice an accusation against Mr. Addington, of the most invidious cast; which I would willingly have passed over, if it were not even now pressed with the most obstinate perseverance. He is said to have appropriated to himself the wealth of the Nation;

* One can hardly forbear exclaiming—

When was it known, that Rome so great in arms,
That her wide walls encompass'd but one man?

to be greedy of place, to have enriched and aggrandized his family. How is the fact? Mr. Addington having served the Public for fifteen years, in situations which confer undisputed claims, and being rather poorer now than when he was elected Speaker, is guilty of having presented his son to a sinecure place of three thousand a year. That Mr. Bragge and Mr. Hiley Addington are in place, will hardly, I think, form an accusation until it be proved (what I apprehend cannot be proved) that they are unfit for their respective situations. Be it remembered too that both were brought into office by Mr. Pitt.

Let me now go over a catalogue, I believe imperfect, of what is enjoyed by their opponents, by the men whose disinterestedness is opposed to his rapacity.

First as to the Grenville's.—Lord Buckingham enjoys a place which produces in war time 18,000*l.* per annum. Lord Grenville has one of 4000*l.* per annum, with a contingent pension (obtained since he went out of office) of 1500*l.* to Lady Grenville. Both have had peerages conferred upon them: so have their relations; Lords ~~Braybrooke~~ ^{Braybrooke}, Carysford, Glastonbury. Mr. Thomas Grenville has a Chief Justiceship in Eyre, worth, I believe, 4000*l.* per annum.

Now for Mr. Pitt's friends.—Lord Chatham enjoys

enjoys a Parliamentary pension, with reversion to Mr. Pitt. Mr. Pitt has the Wardenship of the Cinque Ports. Both these most honourably earned and well deserved. But has not Mr. Addington also his claims?—Lord Melville, it will not be denied, is amply provided for. I quarrel not with that neither, but such is the fact. The Eliots too, I believe, have not been forgotten.

Come we now to their dependants. Mr. Hufkisson is up to the ears in places and emoluments. Mr. Long has a pension. Mr. Rose *enjoys in possession, with reversion to his son*, a place more lucrative than the Clerkship of the Pells. Lastly, Mr. Canning has his place too; one which, though nominally held during pleasure, has not been taken from him. But this is not all. His numerous relatives are all provided for; and two sisters of his are actually receiving each 500*l.* a year from his Majesty's Exchequer, at the time when half that sum cannot be procured for ladies of rank and high family connections.

I have now gone through what I proposed. I have, I think, shewn the futility of the charges brought against Mr. Addington. I have shewn that he came into office upon 'as independent grounds as any Minister ever did. That throughout he has acted with the utmost delicacy, with every feeling of friendship towards Mr. Pitt, while he has not met with the return he de-

served. I have shewn also, and this is the point most material for the public, that the charges brought against him of incapacity and weakness have no foundation in fact, and probably originate in the mere spirit of party, if not in something worse. I have therefore established a claim for him to a continuance of that confidence which the public actually reposes in him, and which, if he meets with only the same indulgence as was shewn to his predecessor, he may flatter himself that he will not very soon forfeit.

To Mr. Pitt I would now address a few words, though I know not how he will receive them. But I have long been used to consider him as a friend; and whatever his feelings may be, I do not find it so easy to get rid of old attachments. I should never have entered into any criticism of any part of his administration, but for his and his adherents' most unfair attacks upon the measures of others. It is his conduct that has thrown the weight, not only of friendship, but of duty, into the opposite scale. I would therefore intreat him to divest himself for a moment of his newly-adopted opinions, of passion, and of prejudice. Let him coolly and candidly examine the facts and the reasonings to which I have called his attention, and let him judge himself. Let him search his own heart. If that condemn him not, I shall wonder. If it do, let him
think

think and act in a manner more worthy of himself.

Let him consider one thing more. We have pamphlets (two at least) avowedly written by his particular friends and adherents. Through the whole of them, the point chiefly laboured and kept in view, is the supposed incapacity and want of talents of Mr. Addington. To this all the endeavours of the writers seem to be directed. To the other members of administration, some degree of ability is allowed. Lord Castlereagh, Mr. Yorke, nay even Lord Hawkesbury, are occasionally brought forward to receive their share of compliment. But as to Mr. Addington, the constant theme is, his utter inability to fill the situation in which he is placed. I will not ask, how this is compatible with the report circulated by Mr. Pitt's friends, that it is to his recommendation that Mr. Addington owes that situation, or how they will justify a recommendation which they are so desirous of shewing to have been utterly improper, because I have shewn how little foundation there is for such a report: but I will ask, is this right? Is this just? Is it fair? Is it the treatment which Mr. Addington's conduct has called for at the hands of Mr. Pitt? Is this the manner in which Mr. Addington would have treated Mr. Pitt, if their situations had been reversed?

To

To my readers I may now address a few words. It may be necessary in the first place for me to say, that I took up my pen, and determined upon this publication without any communication with any person whatsoever; that the whole of it is entirely my own; and that I would never have written a line of it, had I seen any other individual disposed to take that task upon himself, and had I not thought it of importance to the country, as well as to my friends, that the points which I have touched upon should be rightly understood. •

I may perhaps, notwithstanding be ranked in the class of party writers; but in the common acceptation of the term, I disclaim it, and contend that I have a right so to do. To say that I have written with no predilection, would be to say that I am, to a certain degree, incapable of judgment, or culpably indifferent. But what I assert is, that I have shewn no undue or blind attachment to the side in favour of which I have written. Had I not been persuaded that Mr. Addington's conduct was to be defended upon the clearest grounds, with perfect truth and justice, not a line of this would have been written. I distinctly aver that there is not a single fact adduced by me which is not founded in the strictest truth: and, if I know what it is to reason, I have drawn no partial inference, I have used
no

no unfair argument. Such are the claims which I make for myself. As far as the name of party writer is incompatible with these claims, it does not belong to me. Allow me these claims, and it is indifferent to me what I am called.

One word more, and I have done. It is I think, apparent enough that I have even studiously abstained from that, which indeed is my aversion, excessive or unmeaning panegyric. I will now however take leave to say, because I trust, I have established a title to say it, that it is my firm persuasion, that the time is not far distant, when the wisdom and the vigour of Mr. Addington's administration will be as apparent and as universally acknowledged as its mildness, nor will his reputation in that respect be less solid or durable for having been of slow growth.

P O S T S C R I P T.

UPON looking over once more the "View of the Relative Situations," I perceive two points brought forward again, upon which I ought to have said something. One of them is a clear misrepresentation. It is argued, as if Mr. Addington or his friends had required or expected from Mr. Pitt that he should prevent Mr. Canning from speaking as he did in Parliament. Now nothing can be more unfounded. What
Mr.

Mr. Addington's friends expected from Mr. Pitt, what however they could never obtain from him, was, not that he should put any restraint upon Mr. Canning's oratory, but that he should disavow the sentiments uttered by that Gentleman: that he should say, or give authority to others to say, that Mr. Canning was not his representative in Parliament, was not delivering his opinions; which was a mistake that, owing to Mr. Pitt's silence on that head, was actually made by some persons, and hardly kept clear of by others.

The effect produced therefore, however unintentional it *might* be on the part of Mr. Pitt, was certainly something very like what is described by the "Near Observer."

The other point relates wholly to Mr. Canning.—The "Member of Parliament" says of him, that "he is known, from the moment that the late Ministers resigned, to have disapproved the choice of their Successors:" that "he protested against it at the time, and *has continued his protest ever since.*" Will this same "Member of Parliament" affirm, that Mr. Canning has, *at no time*, retracted his *protest*, or repented of his opposition; that he has never shewn a disposition to take office under Mr. Addington?

F I N I S.

REPLY

TO

A PLAIN ANSWER,

&c.

WHATEVER opinion may be formed of the talents and conduct of any man or set of men, who, in or out of office, act a distinguished part on the great political theatre, few will doubt, that, since the beginning of the present century, the situation of these realms called both for upright intentions and efficient qualifications. In such-perilous circumstances, it ~~was~~ the duty of every man, according to the measure of his capacity and powers, to contribute his exertions for the defence and salvation of his country; and certainly it was no time for any who had long laboured at the wheel to relax, much less to withdraw his efforts, unless he was convinced that they were prejudicial, or at least useless. The more important the post, of the higher consequence it was by whom it should be maintained,

maintained, and the more blamable dereliction from any consideration but the public good. Few will deny the prefatory observation of a "Plain Answer to Cursory Remarks," that "the nation is deeply interested in the real character of those who manage its affairs, and that every fair attempt to develope their character, or to appreciate duly their pretensions, is justly entitled to general approbation." The same author farther adds, "As every such endeavour is likely to answer a beneficial purpose, so every attempt to mislead upon this point, has a hurtful and mischievous tendency." I most perfectly agree with him, that endeavours to misrepresent on subjects of such moment, are pernicious in proportion to the sophistry or eloquence by which they are executed; and indisscussing the truth of his own assertions, and the cogency of his reasonings, I shall uniformly grant this introductory position. I also agree with him in a remark, which is not less just for being trite, that *party has a tendency to pervert truth*. It was unnecessary for the Answerer to expatiate on this topic: if any one doubted the maxim, by looking at the writer's pamphlet, he must be satisfied, that, at least in one instance, it is demonstratively true.

The great object of the writer is, to exalt a certain junto, and to degrade the counsellors by whom his Majesty's government has been administered

nistered during almost three years of the most trying emergency which British history has to record. Were the scope of the production merely to celebrate the powers and virtues of Mr. Pitt, none could more readily concur than the writer of these pages, as none can hold that statesman in higher estimation, and not many have written more in favour of his political character. But the Answerer is not the advocate of William Pitt, who for seventeen years at the head of his Majesty's measures, was the preserver of his country from being involved in the fate of surrounding nations. He pleads for William Pitt, the understood partner (not sleeping) of a certain political firm, viz. Pitt, Grenville, Windham, and Co. with some other leading members less active, and various not leading members, sufficiently active, but not very important. The pamphlet in question is to be regarded as a panegyric on what is called the Grenville party, to which by the pamphleteer Mr. Pitt is presumed to have acceded; and an invective against the present Ministers, who have not implicitly followed the injunctions of that party, and would think it better in time of danger to rouse courage and energy, than to spread despair, and thereby paralyze effort, even though Mr. Windham, Lord Grenville, and their coadjutors, deemed it most expedient to

encourage despondency, and to repress exertion.

I propose to meet the Answerer on his own ground, and, in a plain contest of evidence, to plead a special issue as to various points and allegations, extending to a general issue, as to the merit or demerit of the Ministers of the Crown, compared with that band of individuals which the writer of the Plain Answer proposes to be substituted in their stead. Mr. Pitt, Mr. Dundas, Lord Grenville, and Mr. Windham, left the highest offices of administration in a certain state of their country, domestic and foreign. In that state Mr. Addington, Lord Hawkesbury, Lord Hobart, and Lord Castlereagh, found their country! What have the present Ministers left undone that was right, or done that was wrong, to evince their incompetence to fill the offices which they hold? Or what have Mr. Windham and his co-operators done that was right, or opposed that was wrong, to establish their competency? These are plain and broad questions to be solved by facts and documents, and not by declamatory praise or abuse, or by indirect insinuations. On the ground which the Answerer has chosen, any discussion of the individual and separate merits of Mr. Pitt would be irrelevant. To meet the Answerer's view, we have to consider not whether Mr. Pitt alone

alone would not be a beneficial accession to the councils of the King ; but whether he with the proposed junto of colleagues were admissible. The solution of this inquiry demands a short retrospect. •

The late counsellors of the King relinquished their offices in most trying circumstances, which, though very noted, I must for the sake of a connexion repeat. Every attempt to bound, had served only to extend, the dominion of France. The stupendous power of the revolutionary enemy, had forced the only efficient confederate of Britain to receive the peace which complete victory had dictated. The south and west of Europe, subdued by the arms, or crouching under the command of that mighty state, were either detached from co-operation, or dragged into hostility with England. The maritime confederacies of the North had hitherto been formed and directed in vain against the mistress of the ocean ; but now a combination was attempted by the whole of naval Europe against that country whose commercial prosperity and maritime greatness is the best nourisher of trade and of navy to the other European states. From Cape North to the Pillars of Hercules and the coasts of the Mediterranean, the naval world was all hostile to the British name : physical calamity was added to political danger ; the nation laboured under a scarcity which the enmity of the northern

northern powers enhanced, by withholding the usual means of relief. When their country was involved in such internal distress, and had almost the whole fighting world as enemies, was the season that Ministers chose for resignation : that is the plain and noted fact, which every one in the three kingdoms knows.

Here I do not mean to assert, that the resignation was wrong ; I simply state the circumstances in which it was made ; and I think I may fairly assume, that these were not circumstances in which the most loyal and patriotic men, conscious of the very transcendent powers that are imputed to the late Ministers by their votaries, would most readily abandon their posts. If Mr. Pitt be the extraordinary man which many others as well as I conceive, and if Mr. Windham and Lord Grenville be the extraordinary men which a very few conceive, certainly that was not the season for depriving their country of such wonderful qualifications : at least their justification required very strong reasons. What were these reasons ? In answering this question, I am aware of the many hypotheses, which ingenuity without information framed, and which credulity adopted ; but it would be idle and useless to follow groundless theories. The Plain Answerer knows the fact ; so do I : *No reasons were communicated by Mr. Pitt or any of his coadjutors, to the other members of the Pitt party, but what were publicly assigned*

assigned at the time by themselves in Parliament. By the Pitt party, I mean the supporters of the late Administration, including most of the members of the present. I do not say that none but the ostensible reasons *existed*, but that none WERE, OR ARE KNOWN, and that to these the retiring Ministers appealed for their justification, in relinquishing their posts at such a period of danger : by their own words let them be justified or condemned.

According to the statement of Mr. Pitt and Lord Grenville in their respective Houses, they relinquished office, *because* they differed in opinion from the Sovereign, on the question of Catholic emancipation * ; and on that sole ground

* The following, according to the Parliamentary reports, were the words of Mr. Pitt on the 16th of February 1801, in answer to a charge from Mr. Sheridan : “ I, and some of my colleagues, did feel it an incumbent duty upon us to propose a measure, on the part of Government, which, under the circumstances of the union so happily effected between the two countries, we thought of great public importance, and necessary to complete the benefits likely to result from that measure : we felt this opinion so strongly, that when we met with circumstances which rendered it impossible for us to propose it as a measure of Government, we felt it equally inconsistent with our duty and our honour, any longer to remain a part of that Government. I beg to have it understood to be a measure which, if I had remained in Government, I must have proposed. What my conduct will be, in a different situation, must be regulated by a mature and impartial review of all the circumstances of the case.” Annual Register for 1801, page 129.

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(by their own avowal) they gave up their offices : because the King's CONSCIENCE dictated a resolution different from their *opinion*, they deemed it expedient, endangered as the country was, to serve him no longer as Ministers.

Was it a point on which the conscience of Mr. Pitt impelled him to choose and maintain a contrary ground ? We should venerate the dictates of conscience, even should we differ from the judgment in which they were formed. If that had been the case, he would have proposed it even when out of office, and satisfied his conscience by the attempt, though it should have proved unsuccessful. But he himself never asserted it to be a point of conscience ; he professedly regarded it as a proposition connected with his ministerial station, and not necessarily to be brought forward should that station change, as in fact he never has brought it forward. In point of expediency, the question centred in the following grounds : *Was the gratification of the Catholics at that time, or the continuance of Mr. Pitt as Minister, of the greater importance to the nation ? Was its discussion at all necessary at this emergency ? and if so, why has it not been agitated since ?* In fact, it appears from Mr. Pitt's conduct, that he did not regard compliance with the Catholics as politically necessary. It is understood that he, during the progress of the Union, incurred certain engagements, direct or implied, for effecting
this

this point : if he did, he contracted prematurely, for what did not depend on himself, and could be neither in honour or justice bound for the conscience of the King ; he might have discharged his promise as far as in him lay, and, though foiled in that project, still might have exerted his talents in removing domestic distress, and discomfiting foreign enemies. The more the ability that is allowed to Mr. Pitt, the less strength is there in such a reason for resignation : besides, it would not have been new to Mr. Pitt to have retained his office, though he had been crossed in Parliament. Though Minister, he had the misfortune to be outvoted when he proposed reform ; and though Minister, he was outvoted on the Duke of Richmond's plan for fortification : nevertheless he did not think it necessary to resign. On the Plain Answerer's premises, that Lord Grenville and Mr. Windham are statesmen of consummate ability, the conclusion is obvious, ~~that their reasons for resignation were~~ equally insufficient and inadmissible.

In arduous circumstances the late Ministers left the helm of national affairs, and in as arduous circumstances the present undertook the management. Their predecessors vouched for the competence of the present Ministers, and publicly pledged themselves to support their measures. Of these promises, that of Mr. Pitt was expressed with his usual caution and discrimina-

tion ; nevertheless it tended very forcibly to convey his high opinion of the new Cabinet, both as to talents and intentions, his conviction that they would amply discharge the duties of their station, and that it was his purpose to afford them all the support which his ability and influence could give. Let the reader peruse Mr. Pitt's speech of February 16th, 1801, and impartially say, that it could bear any other construction, than high praise of Mr. Addington and Lord Hawkesbury, and a promise to afford them active and constant support.

The engagements of Lord Grenville, as contained in his speeches about the same period, were, as usual with his Lordship, more detailed and minute, and the language which he employed was more precise and specific. These engagements, however, were all public ; and here I must correct an inaccuracy in the very able author of the "Cursory Remarks." He asserts, "that his Majesty's most gracious offer of his confidence to Mr. Addington, could not have been, and WAS NOT, definitively accepted, until a solemn authentic pledge of honour had been given by the late Ministers, for their CONSTANT, ACTIVE, and ZEALOUS SUPPORT." There the Remarker is somewhat near the truth, without actually reaching it: the late Ministers gave no direct pledge privately ; but their language and conduct privately,

was

was such as to imply the support which they promised publicly.

It soon appeared, that if the support of Lord Grenville had been necessary to the efficiency of Ministers, they could not have acted. They had not been three months in office, when Lord Grenville was decidedly hostile. That Secretary for the Foreign Department had left his country on the eve of hostility with the Northern Powers, and negotiations carried on according to his plan and manner, being unavailing, force was necessary. The first foreign act of the new Council, was the expedition to the Baltic. They employed a policy consonant to the combined justice and power of the British nation. They sent negotiators for peace to Copenhagen, and seconded their propositions by a strong fleet, which should beset the Sound. The promptness of departure, and the decisive boldness of the enterprise, opened the way to conciliation ; and policy concluded an adjustment, which firmness and courage had most effectually commenced. By the settlement between Britain and the Northern Powers, all the contested points were so clearly ascertained, as to preclude any likelihood of future contest : the right of search was accurately defined, and the enumeration of contraband articles was more definite and specific than at any former period. The convention which the united vigour and moderation of

the new Ministers effected, was almost the same which Lord Grenville had sought to effect, but had not been able to accomplish ; nevertheless Lord Grenville severely blamed the adjustment, and endeavoured to procure the censure* of Parliament against those who performed what he tried, but could not perform.

Here it is worthy of remark, that *the first occasion which called forth the enmity of Lord Grenville against the present Ministers, was their success in the very measure in which he had failed.* If it was thus his Lordship discharged his promises of support, Ministers, Parliament, and the nation, had the consolation to find that such support was not wanted. Under the administration of Lord Grenville we had been at enmity with the North, and now we were in amity ; Ministers could do without the support of Lord Grenville :—*hinc illæ lachrimæ.* He had promised support, when he conceived them to depend on his great and powerful protection ; but when he saw that disputes, which, under his management, had in a series of progressive asperity during several years been drawing to a rupture, were now in a few weeks adjusted by his successors, he was angry with these successors. Such a sentiment was natural : it was indeed *galling* to a statesman of so many years experience, to be completely out-

* See Lord Grenville's speech, June 5th, 1801:

done by those who had been only three months in office.

Ministers themselves had commenced their counsels with the most moderate pretensions: they assumed no high tones of either personal or official importance; they simply requested to be judged from their conduct, and in the northern discussion they evinced what that conduct was: it evidently manifested prudence, moderation, and vigour. Such qualities rarely fail either in private or public life. The career of Britain continued successful, she was paramount at sea; the armaments of our enemy were either confined by our fleets, or destroyed in the harbours; and we demonstrated that our soldiers can fight as well as our sailors themselves. The banks of the Nile, as well as its mouth, witnessed the resistless force of British heroism. Even during the arduous contentions of war, commerce flourished beyond all the experience of former times. But our mighty efforts required repose, if it were possibly attainable. The situation of our enemy also demanded peace; and on the supposition that nations and rulers act from views of interest, it was probable, that, if peace were concluded, it would continue.

On the question of peace and war there had been three classes of opinion in the House of Commons, which originated at an early stage of the French revolution. First was the theory of Burke, who deemed the Gallic revolutionists
of

of every kind and succession, the determined, and inveterate enemies of religion and virtue, civilization and manners, rank and property, order and government, throughout the world. He reckoned them totally incorrigible by any internal means, and therefore strenuously inculcated a combination of force to overpower an assemblage of beings who in his idea, unless conquered, would destroy mankind. From such an hypothesis, eternal war with France, while that system lasted, was a necessary consequence: according to Burke, we must either crush the revolutionary system, or be crushed ourselves.

Opposite to this view was the theory of Mr. Fox and Mr. Sheridan, who with their associates and supporters imputed the excesses of the revolutionists to the glowing enthusiasm of new liberty; who conceived the fervour would gradually subside if left to itself, but would become more violent and destructive, ~~from~~ foreign interference: that such interposition would not only feed the enthusiasm, but bestow on it military energy and direction; and thus render so numerous and potent a people extremely dangerous to the rest of Europe. If these premises had been just, Mr. Fox and his friends would have reasoned wisely in uniformly recommending peace.

Thirdly, was a middle opinion, between the two extremes of Burke and of Fox, maintained

tained by Mr. Pitt, Mr. Dundas, and Lord Grenville, who, with their numerous supporters, did not agree with Mr. Burke, in conceiving that we must wage eternal war with France until she restored her monarchy ; but on the other hand differed from Mr. Fox, in their estimation of the French revolution, and its consequences, actual and probable, to the security of Britain. They thought that the reciprocal action of her principles and her power at that time endangered the safety of Britain ; that we ought to make war while she menaced our security, but to terminate hostilities as soon as that security was ascertained, without any regard to the internal polity of France. This was the language which Mr. Pitt and Lord Grenville had uniformly held during their administration, and which they repeated in their speeches to their respective Houses. At their resignation, this was the language of a very great majority in Parliament, and throughout the nation. The new Ministers, like their predecessors, desired peace whenever it could be procured with security, and they hoped that the real welfare of France might be so far regarded by Bonaparte, as to induce him to preserve a peace which was so obviously the interest of those whom he governed, and indeed his own. Every purpose which Mr. Pitt, and the great majority of the Parliament and nation, professed

to

to seek by war, as far as the state, in which his administration left the country, permitted, was accomplished by the peace. Britain had proposed to guard against revolutionary principles; this end was now assured: partial disaffection and misguided infatuation were overpowered by patriotic loyalty, and the sound wisdom of the nation was strongly impressed by the awful lessons of experience. There was now very little disposition to subvert a constitution, whose excellence was the more obviously manifest, from striking contrast. Britain had farther proposed by war to maintain the independence of Europe if she could, but at any rate to secure her own. The powers of the continent not efficiently co-operating, she could not protect their rights; her own she could, and did protect. She proved she could defend herself, single-handed, against all who might assail her; she ascertained her security in the manifestation of her strength; she evinced to her antagonist, that contest with her was certain discomfiture, and therefore that the attempt was madness. Her reliance for the continuance of peace was founded not on a conviction of Bonaparte's faith, but simply of Bonaparte's sanity. Ministers reasoned fairly *à priori*, that a nation or individual would not so far deviate from common prudence and common sense, as to renew war with the certainty of defeat. No subsequent frenzy could be any

argument against the reasonableness of supposing Bonaparte then not devoid of his senses. Long before 1801, he had demonstrated himself a consummate rogue, but had not betrayed symptoms of insanity. The peace was not made on a supposition that Bonaparte was not a villain, but that he was not a madman. It was presumed he would attempt no roguery that was obviously contrary to his interest: the presumption, it is true, has proved wrong, nevertheless it was fair at the time. A PRESUMPTION THAT FRANCE AND HER MASTER WOULD PREFER PEACE, AND THE REVIVAL OF COMMERCE, TO WAR, AND THE ANNIHILATION OF COMMERCE, AND WOULD NOT WISH FOR HOSTILITIES WITH THE ASSURANCE OF DEFEAT, WAS THE TENURE OF OUR SECURITY FOR THE CONTINUANCE OF PEACE; and in the usual estimation of human conduct, either private or public, it was certainly very natural to suppose, that a man would not court loss and defeat. The reasoning was so probable, that in the fatigued state of the country, the experiment was certainly worth trying, and blameable would Ministers have been, if they had not made the trial.

The former Ministers had chalked out a line in their repeated negotiations, from which their successors, in the existing circumstances, could not deviate. The objects which they sought were, the security of Britain, restitution to

her allies, and the independence of Europe. From the events of the war, and the separate treaties which had been concluded by our first confederates, it was impracticable for Britain to provide for their independence, which they had neglected themselves. Restitution to allies was now become a much narrower proposition than some years before, because allies were so few : and to those who remained, restitution was effected. Respecting Britain, Ministers did not think it necessary to insist on retaining all the acquisitions of our valour. Such retention would have been foreign to the object of the contest, as we had not fought to subdue the possessions of others, but to secure our own. Security has ever been the principle of British wars, and to security only Ministers looked in the negotiations for peace. But it was not only the general maxims of national policy, that bounded the demands of British Ministers : they were farther limited by the conditions which Lord Grenville had in more favourable circumstances proposed to less energetic rulers. " Could," as the *Near Observer* justly remarks, " Mr. Addington propose terms less favourable to Bonaparte, than Lord Grenville had offered to Barras and Reubell ?" But in fact better terms were procured than Lord Grenville offered at Lisle, without being able to obtain. In the ninth year of the war, Britain procured cessions, the very mention of
which

which in the fifth, caused an order from France for breaking off the negotiation*.

As a mere question of terms and equivalents, it may be doubted, whether we might not have commanded greater extent of territory, if acquisition had been our object ; but acquisition was an object which the present, like the former Ministry, uniformly disclaimed ; and the retention of a plantation more or less, was held to be a very inadequate ground for incurring the expense and loss of another campaign. To the terms no objection could be made, the avoidance of which would not have been attended by much greater evils. No objection could be advanced by Mr. Pitt, Mr. Dundas, and Lord Grenville, or any of that class of the supporters of the war, that would not gainsay their uniform reasonings, and that would not contravene the principles of their own negotiations. From Lord Grenville himself, the active and ostensible instrument of those negotiations, objections could least of all have been anticipated, upon any PUBLIC and political grounds. From *private* considerations, and from recent conduct, opposition from that nobleman could not be so unexpected. On the 5th of June he had censured a convention that was an improved copy of the model which he had at-

* See treaty of peace, and compare it with the negotiation at Lisle.

tempted in vain to effect. On the 29th day of October he opened his invectives against the preliminary treaty, an improved copy of the model, which he in much more favourable circumstances had tried, but was not able, to finish. Ministers, in the more difficult situation, did what in the easier, Lord Grenville tried, but could not do. To repeat our Latin quotation, *hinc illæ lachrimæ*. In the march of human sentiments and passions, the feelings of his Lordship, if not praiseworthy, were at least natural. It is galling to any man to find an important task which he has tried in vain, performed by another ; should the failing party happen to be a proud man, the gall will be the more bitter.

Personal asperity I wish to avoid, although, if I were to choose another course, I might plead the example of his Lordship's panegyrist, the Plain Answerer. I cannot, however, forbear a few observations, which shall be gentle, and, I trust, will be decorous. The house of Grenville cannot well be said to number humility among its virtues, and I am at a loss to know what constituents of superiority peculiar to itself, that family possesses. Rank and fortune it has in common with many others. Its personal talents I have seen mentioned in print, but cannot say I have found evinced in fact. The late Earl Temple was a man of some political note ; but his importance, every man that reads history knows,

was

was merely adventitious. He was the brother-in-law of the immortal Secretary Pitt, and, as Mr. Pitt's brother-in-law, attained his political eminence. If I am incorrect in this opinion, let the Plain Answerer state to me the political acts of Earl Temple himself, that either attained or deserved celebrity. George Grenville was a man of more intrinsic consequence than his elder brother, and an industrious, bustling, pains-taking man he was: a lawyer full of wise saws and modern instances*; an accomptant, a financier; but as an able statesman I have to learn whereon history will rest his claims. History will transmit him down to posterity as the deviser of American taxation; and if that entitle him to high political fame, his fame is indisputable. The Marquis of Buckingham holds rank and fortune, and has held office. If he has displayed high political talents, either as a senator or minister, sorry I am to be so unacquainted with recent events, that they never reached my knowledge. As a private nobleman of importance in the county which contains his possessions he deserves credit; but as a public man of high consequence in the nation, I am ignorant of his pretensions. Perhaps the growing eloquence and genius of

* See speech of Mr. William Pitt, on the repeal of the Stamp Act, and his remark on Mr. Grenville bringing the statute-book doubled down in dogs' ears, in order to cite legal precedent on a grand question of political expediency.

his *heir* may be one prop of the political importance of the house of Grenville. The young senator at least seems to have adopted the old proverb, He who *s pares to speak, s pares to speed!* but few that have heard his Lordship,* will complain of his being parsimonious in oratory. After all, I doubt the family must rest its claims to political importance on Lord Grenville; and ~~what~~ these are, I hope I shall fairly appreciate in the course of this essay. All I have to consider at present is, that Lord Grenville and his family have a high share of pride, and conceive themselves entitled to a political domination, their pretensions to which are not so unquestionable in the eyes of an impartial public. The pride of his Lordship has often manifested itself in haughty repulsiveness, very inconsistent with the wise accessibility of office, and not rarely in offensive petulance, by no means conciliatory either in private or public business. A British statesman might have marked his sentiments of the republican rulers of France, as far as it was wise to mark them, by dignified language and conduct, without insulting their Ambassador *by receiving him in boots*. A British statesman might have returned a firm and decided negative to the proposition of Bonaparte, without imperious dictation or reproachful invective. Both as a statesman and senator, Lord Grenville evinced an imperiousness of dictation, a self importance

portance of conceit, and an asperity of pride, which easily account for his enmity against rulers who succeeded in what he failed, and who will not follow his judgment instead of their own : hence the virulence of his opposition to a peace which proceeded on his uniform principle, and was very nearly a copy of his unsuccessful plan.

His Lordship abused the peace in all the terms that his eloquence could supply, and in that species of oratory I certainly shall not question his competence. Hence I must take the liberty of observing, that his Lordship sometimes follows a model, without attending to the difference of the case and person. No man can be more successful in sarcasm than Mr. Pitt, nor was that transcendent orator indisposed to such an application of eloquence ; but his animadversions had extraordinary force and poignancy. A few touches of his satire could crush many a long and laborious disputation of honest pains-taking dullness, and repress the flippancy of insignificant volubility, bring pompous emptiness to its real level, or silence acrimonious invective. Lord Grenville is a more frequent and willing satirist than Mr. Pitt ; but there is an immense difference in the ability and effect of the satire. Ovid, I remember, mentions two kinds of arrows ; the one strong and sharp, that never failed to penetrate ; the other was blunt, and had *lead under the shaft* ;

shaft ; so that, however willingly it was shot, it rarely hit the mark, and, if it did, hit it so feebly as to do little execution ; nevertheless its owner would shoot on. A propensity to asperity, without adequate powers, may excite dislike to its possessor, but affords him not the means of striking terror.

Lord Grenville's speeches against Ministers said every thing that splenetic and angry pride could dictate, but nothing that could injure them in the opinion of Parliament and the public, or raise himself in the estimation of either. The nation put the natural construction on such conduct, and conceived that Lord Grenville had thought he was to be a governor of Ministers, perceived they could do without his friendship, and even in defiance of his enmity ; was disappointed and angry at finding his consequence less than he imagined, and in that disappointment and anger railed against Ministers. That these were his Lordship's motives, I do not assert, but that these were the motives generally ascribed to him, I do assert, and his panegyrist knows ; and it certainly was very natural in the public not to ascribe the most exalted motives to a statesman, for inveighing, out of office, against his successors for doing the very thing, and in the very manner, which, in office, he himself proposed. The same opinion the public entertained of his railings throughout the peace. They saw he asserted much, but proved nothing,

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against

against Ministers ; and they saw, that, even if he had proved all he asserted, his conduct did not evince him to possess that disinterested patriotism and magnanimity which pointed him out as the proper person for filling one, of their places : but this is a subject of after-discussion, when I come to the negotiation for that purpose. At present, I am only regarding Lord Grenville in his opposition, and not in the overtures for his appointment. His opposition, either in matter or manner, sorry I am I cannot derive from laudable motives. If, instead of indiscriminate panegyric, the Plain Answerer will afford FACTS on which to rest the praises of Lord Grenville, I shall very gladly retract my opinion.

The opposition of Mr. Windham, at one time, might bear a very different construction from the opposition of Lord Grenville. Mr. Windham was long conceived to be a votary of the Burke theory, of perpetual war with regicide France, and, after he left office, acknowledged himself to have been of that opinion, which he supported with the genius and knowledge that he so eminently possesses, and with an ardour that gives interest to whatever he advances, and that was short only of the fire of his illustrious prototype. Disappointed in the favourite hope of the Burke disciples, that there would never be peace between Britain and any but monarchical France, the ardent fancy of, this statesman saw nothing,

in peace, but disaster and misery to his country; the very benignity of his heart exaggerated the evils which he attributed to conciliation with such a government, and the bitterness with which he attacked its authors. Totally differing in opinion with him, such, nevertheless, was the construction, which, in common with many others, I at first put on Mr. Windham's enmity to the peace. I thought that his opposition originated in reprobation of the Gallic system, and a wish to prevent all intercourse between this country and France; and that to keep up vigilance respecting the movements of the Chief Consul, was one of the grand purposes of the hostility, which, during the peace, he breathed against France and her ruler. The public, I believe, gave him credit for sincerity and conscientiousness in his attacks on the measures and designs of Bonaparte; and had his opposition been merely confined to censure of the peace, and exhortations to war, he probably might have retained that credit of sincerity still.

It is a trite, but a true saying, You may judge of a man by the company he keeps. The chief political comrade of Mr. Windham appears, from his resignation downwards, to have been Mr. Cobbett. By Mr. Windham, it is asserted, and *on very good authority*, that Mr. Cobbett was *set up*; his Porcupine either anticipated, or re-echoed, the sentiments,

ments, and even the language, of Mr. Windham. The first efforts of that work against the peace were chiefly on the Windham plan, and dwelt much more on principle than terms. That might be fair and conscientious. In the course of that session, Cobbett having given up his Porcupine, began a new publication, which he called a Political Register. The character of this work was, like his former, antipacific; but, was much more strongly antiministerial; and indeed a great purpose seemed to be to pour out personal ribaldry against Mr. Addington. Mr. Windham was the, known and avowed patron of Mr. Cobbett, while he was issuing this weekly abuse, and may very fairly be supposed to have approved the scurrility of which he patronized and praised the author. The support and diffusion of the gross invectives that the Register uniformly contained, could not be entirely imputed to the Burke theory. To abominate peace with regicides, it was not necessary to send forth against its framers, *packets of scoldings* on subjects that had nothing to do with peace and war: to encourage coarse and vulgar jokes against Ministers, and to endeavour, as far as his declamation and buffoonery could, to bring them in their private relations into ridicule and contempt. Such endeavours were impotent: the nation judged of Ministers from their own conduct, and not from Cobbett's invectives; but the nation could not impute high and exalted motives to the

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promoters

promoters of low and paltry abuse. From this time it was generally conceived, that something more selfish mixed with Mr. Windham's theory of perpetual war ; and that he too was not without anger that Ministers held places, one of which he might hold himself ; and Mr. Windham was regarded as much a place-hunting antiministerialist, as a disinterested and conscientious opponent of the makers of peace with regicides.

The opposition of 1801-2 had been chiefly, or at least avowedly, antipacific. In the session 1802-3, opposition assumed a new form more nearly akin to the usual enmity to administrations. It was openly and decidedly antiministerial. A cry was set up, that nothing could save the country but a change of men, and the recall of Mr. Pitt. This was the language of the opponents of Government in both Houses, and more particularly of the late coadjutors, and the confidential friends, of Mr. Pitt himself. The Parliament however, and the nation, did not join in the requisition. They judged of the Ministers, not from what their revilers said, but from what the Ministers did.

Ministers had concluded a peace, which the country very much wanted, and very much desired ; they endeavoured to improve the peace to the greatest advantage. One of their first acts after the conclusion of the peace was, to remove the most burdensome of the taxes, that had been deemed necessary during the war, and, while they
were

were diminishing imposts, they were actively extending private and public resources, and the year 1802 saw manufactures and commerce flourishing in the country, even beyond any former precedent of national prosperity. Cobbett might write, Lord Grenville, Messrs. Windham and Canning might speak, the dispraises of Ministers ; BUT IN DIMINISHED BURDENS AND INCREASED COMFORTS THE NATION SAW AND FELT ANSWERS TO ALL THEIR INVECTIVES. The sound and distinguishing sense of Englishmen could not be convinced that the Ministers who had changed their situation from distress to prosperity, were either weak or wicked. They could not conceive, that they who found an estate in an embarrassed situation, lessened the expenditure, increased the receipts, and promoted and produced the rapid improvement of the whole, could either be dishonest or incapable stewards ; and, in spite of every effort of party, Ministers were respected and trusted by the King, Parliament, and the people. They had begun with desiring they should be judged by their conduct : their conduct was found to bear the test of minute scrutiny ; their evident object was the public good ; by the direction of their measures to that purpose were they to be weighed ; and the surest evidence that the direction was right, was success.

Pursuing this general purpose, they did not endeavour to form a party combination ; their government

government was to be supported by measures, and not by confederacies of men. If the series of their policy could not bear them through, they had not recourse to the formation of jundos. In the general election, they first of any Ministers, since Mr. Secretary Pitt in 1761, forbore interference, and left to constituents to return representatives that they should think most worthy of the trust. In this forbearance, Ministers, it must be owned, were not altogether disinterested; they knew well, that, while they pursued the same line of conduct, a great majority of loyal and patriotic members would not fail to afford their support. The party inimical to Ministers confined their invectives to general charges. These men (they would say) have not abilities and experience equal to their situations; but they never, BY A FAIR INDUCTION OF FACTS, proved the alleged deficiency, and a fair induction of facts easily proved the contrary.

Nothing is more common in criticism of every kind, moral and political, as well as literary, than the application of wrong tests; and custom, more than reason, frequently affects our estimates. The last century was very much distinguished in Britain by the honours bestowed on Parliamentary oratory. If we consider the real adaptation of means to good ends, as the standard of wisdom, we may perhaps conclude, that the praises bestowed

stayed on fine speeches, rather surpassed the utility of such exhibitions, or their conduciveness to the purposes of wise deliberation and efficient action. As a play of genius, orations of several hours might be, and were, amusing and entertaining; but as promoting the dispatch of business, their serviceableness is much less clear. On the political, as well as the dramatic theatre, while long declamations are pronounced with every accompaniment of tone and gesture, *the action often stands still*. Never was there a greater display of eloquence, than during the American war; but salutary counsels and beneficial measures did not follow in equal proportion. Plain speaking is sufficient for all the purposes of plain dealing; and in proportion as measures are good, the less they require the varnish of oratory. Mr. Addington and his supporters spoke clear manly sense on points of business; made their hearers masters of the subject which they professed to state; demonstrated what was right or wrong, and why; and therein possessed all the eloquence that is actually necessary for expounding measures, and shewing them either to deserve support or rejection. This kind of eloquence the present Ministers possess, and exert as much as any of their predecessors; and what can the most splendid eloquence add to sound and convincing reasoning, expressed in plain and forcible language, that will render hearers
either

either wiser or more vigorous? Rhetorical amplifications cannot render truth more true. Arguments against Ministers from a supposed deficiency in the power of continuing to speak for two or three hours without intermission, are futile, unless we suppose, that by such length of speeches, Parliamentary measures were better matured and expedited. I confess that hearing the debates, I have often been as thoroughly master of the subject, in the first and explicative parts of Mr. Pitt's speeches, as after they were embellished by every rhetorical grace that invention and practice could bestow; and I do think, that these were the most useful portions of that great orator's eloquence. In speaking of eloquence, few would think of representing Mr. Dundas as a paragon of orators; and yet if the object of a senator be to explain business important to the nation, in order to assist other senators in deliberating and resolving, few men who have been in Parliament for thirty years, have spoken more to the purpose, or less not to the purpose. The essentials of deliberative eloquence, Mr. Addington, and Lord Hawkesbury, and Lord Castlereagh possess: they are clear, forcible, and impressive; they make you perfectly acquainted with the objects, nature, and reasons of their propositions. They also exhibit another quality, extremely favourable to the easy and speedy conveyance of truth, a great share

shape of candour. But resembling Mr. Dundas in the nerves and sinews of their oratory, they are far before him in pleasing graces. Indeed even in Parliamentary splendour, after Mr. Pitt, none of the former Ministers surpassed the present. The ingenious and theorizing subtilty of Mr. Windham has its charms ; but it is addressed to the fancy and the passions, much more frequently than to the understanding ; and is rather the dexterity of a fencer playing with foils, than the plain and direct force of a soldier charging bayonet. Mr. Windham is a man of genius, and a scholar ; but, by temper and habits, much fitter for enjoying elegant and lettered society in private life, than for presiding over the contentions of popular assemblies. He wants self-command, temper, and caution. He could write a very entertaining, and perhaps an instructing book, on various subjects in literature and speculative politics ; but he is not the man for the oratory of business, or for practical politics ; and certainly no other speaker of the former Administration surpasses the chief speakers of the present. Lord Grenville, doubtless, spoke *much oftener* than any of his successors, or most of his coadjutors ; I cannot, however, regard him as deserving the palm of eloquence. Lord Grenville is a man of sense, education, and industry, and is a perspicuous, well-informed, and correct speaker, with a good deal too much prolixity :

and his long speeches are not half so pleasing as his friend Mr. Pitt's. He was unequal to his coadjutor Mr. Dundas in force; and, though much longer and oftener on his legs, did not say near so much as the Caledonian statesman. Besides, Lord Grenville wants that candour and conciliation, which is very useful to eloquence; *an impartial examiner of his speeches must allow them the praise of respectable mediocrity, but very little more. Even if brilliant eloquence were to be the test of ministerial talents, I can see none, except Mr. Pitt, that can claim a superiority in eloquence. But oratory is not the test of ministerial excellence; the fame of Mr. Pitt himself rests on much stronger grounds. In transmitting him to posterity, history will consider how he planned and acted, will record him as the framer of most beneficial schemes of finance, the preserver of his country from revolution and anarchy, the suppressor of Irish rebellion, the uniter of Ireland with Britain, and the maintainer of the British empire in its integrity and power, when surrounding nations groaned under the Gallic yoke. These are the merits on which the fame of Mr. Pitt will rest; his eloquence will be a very secondary and subordinate article in the estimate of his character. The measures of that statesman for counteracting French principles and opposing French power, will be remembered and celebrated, when his orations
excite

excite no more curiosity, than an historical and political reader now feels to inquire, whether Cecil, Howard, and Raleigh, in defending their country against the Spanish Armada, found it advisable to make speeches three hours in length. Not *words*, but *ACTIONS*, must speak for a Minister; and actions have uniformly spoken for the present.

While Ministers were successfully employing themselves in domestic policy, they had a very difficult part to play in foreign. They had proceeded, as we have seen, on a supposition that appeared very natural and probable, that Bonaparte would adhere to peace, because it was his interest; but the event did not justify this expectation. From the very beginning of the peace, the Corsican manifested towards England a spirit of hostility, as inconsistent with the interest of France, as with justice and the law of nations. To meet this conduct, British Ministers had to watch every movement directly or circuitously inimical; and yet to preserve the peace for which the national faith was pledged. To effect these purposes required moderation and prudence, that would not be provoked to strike a blow prematurely; and yet firmness and precaution, to prevent the blow from being struck by the other party. The first and earliest measure of this watchful policy, was the maintenance of a much larger peace establishment than ever had been on foot in Britain. During

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the peace, the naval force was uniformly fifty thousand men, and the military in an adequate proportion. The proof of this fact rests upon official documents, which were laid before the House, and are accessible to any person that takes the trouble of making the proper application. Cobbett weekly asserted, that both the fleet and army were in a feeble and reduced state; but the fact, as established by vouchers, happened to be diametrically opposite to the assertions of Cobbett.

Not to have reduced the national force at all, would have been to have undergone the expense of a war establishment, without the probability of victory, which we have in all our contests with France: **BRITAIN LOVES PEACE, WITHOUT FEARING WAR.** We seek no addition of territory, we do not employ our maritime supremacy in acquiring possessions; our power and riches have been obtained by the habitual exercise of ability, enterprise, skill, and industry; conducted by wisdom, and regulated by justice. Britain has uniformly been the votary of peace; and not one instance does history record of her taking arms, but in her own defence. Having made peace, we faithfully adhere to peace: this indeed is the **GENERAL AND CHARACTERISTIC POLICY OF THE NATION.**

Perfectly conformable to the national spirit of justice and magnanimity, was the conduct of Ministers towards Bonaparte. The demands of the Corsican,

Corsican, in arrogance and insolence, surpassed any instance mentioned in the annals of diplomatic discussion. Without following in detail, topics which have been so often repeated, I have only to observe, that his requisitions were as impotent as iniquitous; that he threatened without the power of executing. Britain only had resisted and vanquished his efforts of pillage and devastation. Having plundered all he could in Egypt, he cast about for a new field; and this was not far off: Acre was very rich, and the cities beyond it still richer. But here was the fatal reverse, that so enraged the Corsican against the protectors of the world from robbery and massacre. The self-willed Corsican could not bear to be crossed. He had hitherto prospered, for he had never encountered Britons. The wolf had committed bloodshed and devastation, BECAUSE he had never been met by the mastiff. Hence his abomination of the English, which overbore every maxim of interest and policy. The modest amount of his propositions was, that if the British Government would only let him invade and plunder on the Continent; change the constitution of Britain; deprive the people of their dearest liberties; annihilate the press of Britain, which would speak truth and virtue, and consequently reprobate usurpation, plunder, and murder; bind up national virtue, as well as national discernment; and withhold hospitality from

from the unfortunate, as well as cease to brand the iniquitous with deserved infamy*: if we should thus change the national character, he would cultivate peace and commercial connexion with Britain; but as we would not make such concessions, he prevented trade between the two countries, he kept a French army in Holland, in violation of the rights of that people, and in contravention to the treaty of Amiens. In defiance of our remonstrances, he invaded, oppressed, and plundered the Swiss: still Britain endeavoured to preserve peace, and by expostulation to bring the French Government to a sense of justice. THE PRINCIPLE OF OUR NEGOTIATION WAS THE MODERATION OF CONSCIOUS RECTITUDE, JOINED WITH THE FIRMNESS OF CONFIDENT POWER, NOT OSTENTATIVELY EXERTED.

In the course of the discussion, notwithstanding such unprecedented matters and manners as we had to encounter, Britain, true to her uniform policy, employed every effort consistent with national interest and dignity, in preserving peace. When Bonaparte required the suppression of strictures on French affairs in our English newspapers, our Government coolly stated to him, that what he demanded was not in their power to grant: that, respecting libellous strictures on the French Government, or chief magistrate, they

* See the conversation of the 17th of February 1803, between Bonaparte and Lord Whitworth.

could only proceed by the courts of law, as in strictures upon our own Government. The Chief Consul not only persisted, notwithstanding this answer, but required that the constitution should be changed so far as to prevent the press from taking cognizance of foreign transactions. Such an absurd and insolent demand our Government did not inveigh against as arrogant and insulting, but merely rejected as impracticable. The manner also of our Ministers was temperate, though firm; there was none of that priggish petulance which has prevented the fair reception of overtures for continuing peace; none of that asperity of invective, which irritates without intimidating. British Ministers wisely considered that mildness of manner is perfectly consistent with force of conduct, and that, in preparing to fight, scolding is not a necessary preliminary.

Ministers plainly told Bonaparte what we would not suffer, because contrary to the spirit of peace, and to national security; but he persisted in hostility. The Report of Sebastiani coincided with the whole series of Consular acts, in avowing enmity to this country; and a determination to aggrandize Bonaparte at our expense. Such an accumulation of injury and insult required urgent demands of satisfaction. Such were made, but without effect; it therefore remained either to yield to a combination of
injury

injury and insult, unprecedented in our history, or to meet lawless arrogance and injustice, as became the rectitude, patriotism, loyalty, and force of the British character; and war was unavoidable.

In the history of negotiations, I defy Cobbett, even with the much more powerful assistance of Mr. Windham, to adduce a single instance of one that was conducted more completely on British principles of justice and vigour, than the negotiations of spring 1803, and *I am willing to go over any that they or their friend the Plain Answerer shall mention, and discuss them clause by clause, article by article*; and I do assert, without fear of confutation, though not without the certainty of contradiction, that THE CONDUCT OF MINISTERS IN THAT DISCUSSION, DEMONSTRATED THEM MEN OF HIGH PRACTICAL ABILITIES, guided by prudence, and tempered by moderation, but fortified by vigour. Such qualities are paramount to a thousand verbose speeches. Here, as throughout, they may appeal to their conduct, as the test of their merit.

On the eve of being involved in a war with such an inveterate, implacable, and potent enemy, the country feeling animation and confidence, nevertheless felt anxiety: the nation wished every possible resource of strength to be called into action; they were perfectly satisfied with the Ministers who in a short time had so much bettered

bettered their condition, and alleviated their burdens.

Though war appeared inevitable, yet the great majority of the people were satisfied that much benefit had accrued from the short respite of the peace, and were grateful to its authors; nevertheless many wished the junction of other known talents with theirs, and that Mr. Pitt should have a share in the existing Cabinet. Overtures were made to that effect, but very different in origin and circumstances, from those which are assigned by the "Plain Answerer." That writer's account of this transaction is as follows: "Towards the end of March, or at the beginning of April, upon the eve of the war, after it was distinctly known to Mr. Addington, that Mr. Pitt strongly disapproved of some of the leading measures of his government; and after an overture had been made on the part of Mr. Addington, too foolish, I had almost said, too insulting to be noticed, a distinct proposition (originating, not, as has been insinuated, with Lord Melville, but entirely with Mr. Addington himself) was made to Mr. Pitt, the object of which was his return to the official situation he formerly held in Administration; and, as I understand, the arrangement was to have taken place, whenever the negotiation then pending with France should have been brought to a conclusion. It was also signified that vacancies would be made for the purpose of admitting

admitting Lord Melville into the Cabinet, and some other of Mr. Pitt's friends into different official situations." In answer to this assertion, I aver, and I aver with the confidence of known truth, that **THIS STATEMENT OF THE PLAIN ANSWERER IS ESSENTIALLY AND GROSSLY FALSE.** Whereas he affirms, that, on the part of Mr. Addington, a foolish and insulting proposition was made to Mr. Pitt; the fact is, no proposition, either foolish or wise, insulting or conciliatory, was made, by or from Mr. Addington, directly or indirectly, or from any person connected with Mr. Addington. **THE NEGOTIATION DID NOT ORIGINATE WITH MR. ADDINGTON OR ANY OF HIS FRIENDS;** it proceeded from Lord Melville: this I do not insinuate, I directly affirm, and I appeal to Lord Melville himself, if the affirmation be not true, and even correctly accurate. In the main fact, as to the origin of the negotiation, the Plain Answerer is entirely wrong; I will not say erroneous, not knowing whether the misstatement be unintentional or wilful. The internal evidence of the composition itself, and especially of the phraseology *, impresses me with an idea that the writer

* Such as pretty exclamations and antitheses of a kind that I remember I used much to admire when hot from the rhetoric class, with a rounding of periods, that seems to be framed on the model of Dr. Blair's lectures on harmony.

is one who might know better. *Who he is*, however, is of less consequence, than WHAT HE WRITES; and here I must notice an incidental observation, that *Mr. Pitt strongly disapproved of the leading measures of Government.* This acknowledgment justifies the able reasoning of the *Near Observer*, tending to prove, that Mr. Pitt had really long been adverse to the present Administration, though he did not profess such hostility himself indeed kept aloof from Parliamentary business, and expressed neither approbation nor censure. From the invectives of Mr. Pitt's confidential friends, during the first months of the session of 1802-3, Ministers, Parliament, and the public, with great appearance of probability, concluded that Mr. Pitt was become unfriendly to the present Cabinet; but the fact was not certainly known until announced by Mr. Pitt's friend, the *Plain Answerer*; and here the *Plain Answerer* goes much farther in supporting the allegations of the *Near Observer*, than the *Near Observer* himself. The *Observer* inferred the enmity of Mr. Pitt, from circumstances and conduct of the period in question. The *Answerer*, with the confidence of communication and authority, declares the inference to be just; and from this *Secretary* we are to understand, that Mr. Pitt, strongly disapproving of measures of Government, absented himself from Parliament, instead of coming forward to express such disapproba-

tion, and proposing the substitution of counsels that he should deem beneficial to his country. The writer appears the ardent friend of Mr. Pitt, as a member of the Grenville and Windham party; but if his friendship for Mr. Pitt 'individually, be equally warm, it is not in this instance judiciously exerted. What is the plain and real amount of this allegation of the Answerer? That Mr. Pitt was actually adverse to Ministers, when he made no declarations of enmity. This first is a view not favourable to Mr. Pitt's sincerity; and implies, that disapproving greatly of measures, as injurious to the country, he did not attend his duty in the Senate, to oppose these measures; and this second is a view not favourable to Mr. Pitt's loyalty and patriotism. So much for the alleged dispositions of Mr. Pitt at the alleged overtures for a negotiation. Let us now proceed to the negotiation itself, and, however it originated, regard it as actually begun.

Having 'asserted' (contrary to truth), that the proposition was made from Mr. Addington to Mr. Pitt, the Plain Answerer proceeds to Mr. Pitt's reply, in which I do believe, he (the Plain Answerer) is correct, and on his own statement shall I rest my arguments. The following is his account: "Mr. Pitt replied, that he would not enter upon the question of arrangements, *until he was distinctly informed, by a message from the highest quarter, that his services were thought essential;*

tial; that, if so called upon, in spite of the precarious state of his health, he should not decline the offer of his best advice and assistance : that he was fully aware of the great and increasing difficulties of the country, and that he saw the necessity of a *strong, vigorous, and efficient government* : that, if called upon by his Majesty, he should feel it to be his duty to propose an Administration, consisting principally of the members of the present and of the late Government : that in the general arrangement which he should submit for his Majesty's consideration, he should, if they assented, include the Lords *Grenville* and *Spencer* ; but that he should press no person whatever upon his Majesty, only reserving to himself the power of *declining the undertaking altogether, if he could not form such a Government as would enable him, in his judgment, to conduct the affairs of the nation with a fair probability of success.*"

Such was the reply of Mr. Pitt, and what is its precise signification? Is not the import obviously, " If the king require my services, he may have them, *on accepting the conditions that I shall dictate.* . Unless I am suffered to create a Cabinet, I shall not be member of a Cabinet. I shall not return to the service of my royal master, unless I be allowed to occupy the power of that master, and, instead of him, to appoint such servants as I shall be pleased to choose. If I am to be Minister at all, I am also to act as Sovereign, and
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to choose the other Ministers. The King is evidently satisfied with his present Cabinet; I am not; I propose to introduce their most active and inveterate enemy, who has uniformly reproached them for doing what he attempted in vain. I do not force my services on the King, *I simply state their price.* He may purchase my ministerial efforts, if he will surrender the royal prerogative into my hands." I appeal to any impartial reader whether the above be not the obvious amount of Mr. Pitt's reply, as stated by this advocate of the Grenville junto. And were these propositions to be offered to the King? Could Mr. Addington, or his coadjutors, advise his Majesty to accept services proposed with such stipulations of uncontrolled command?

No man can more fervently admire the late Secretary Pitt than I; yet I have ever thought his celebrated declaration about guidance, rather an instance of personal pride and imperiousness, than of magnanimous loyalty and patriotism. A man of transcendent talents and political experience may most effectually serve his King and country, even though every appointment and measure should not be entirely at his nod; and if he be loyal and patriotic, he will serve his country as a co-operating statesman, even *without the possession of despotic sway.* None has more ably maintained the prerogative of the King to appoint his own Ministers, than Mr. Pitt. For this right of the
Crown

Crown he boldly and wisely stood up against a combination of number, genius, and political ability and power, that has rarely been equalled by any party recorded in the history of England. He vindicated the constitutional prerogative of the Sovereign against a Wedderburne, a North, a Sheridan, a Burke, and a Fox, backed by the whole power of the House of Commons, and he was successful ; thereon rests the merit of one of his most arduous defences of the British Constitution ; yet Mr. Pitt, who would not suffer the prerogative of the Crown to be violated by a branch of the Legislature, here proposes its exercise should be abandoned to the discretion of a single individual ; and, what is the purpose of the stipulated dictation ?—*the introduction of Lord Grenville into the Cabinet.* Mr. Pitt well knew that the political conduct and declarations of that nobleman had been such as rendered him inadmissible among the present Ministers. Could Mr. Addington, Lord Hawkesbury, and their coadjutors, be colleagues with a man, who, after professions of friendship and promises of co-operation, had uniformly breathed hostility, and poured out invectives and abuse ? As well might it be expected that they would receive a proposal for appointing Mr. Cobbett one of the Under-secretaries, as Lord Grenville to be Secretary of State. That proposition, therefore, if really made, was, to borrow the Answerer's words, "*too foolish and*

and insulting to be noticed." The assertion proceeds on a supposition, that in a negotiation between Messrs. Addington and Pitt, Mr. Pitt actually stated as a preliminary that Mr. Addington and his colleagues must make room for their most bitter enemy.

This view of the proposition, however, merely regards Lord Grenville as the adversary of Mr. Addington's administration, and therefore very improper to be proposed in a negotiation with Mr. Addington. Let us consider the question in a different light : *What are the grounds on which any impartial politician would make a change in the present Ministry, in order to substitute Lord Grenville?* What are the facts in Lord Grenville's political life, on which we are to rest his pretensions to superior abilities as a lawgiver and a statesman ? He came into Parliament in or about the year 1784, and till 1789 was simply a senator without holding any executive office (at least that I recollect), frequently spoke, and his speeches contained good sense and information, but no range of political wisdom, that could guide the deliberations of the Legislature. At the time of the regency he made a very long and laborious speech, which correctly repeated all the facts, precedents, principles, and arguments of one side, on a question that for several months had almost exclusively occupied parliamentary and public attention. Not long after, he was appointed

appointed one of the Secretaries of State, and from 1789 to 1801 was a statesman as well as a senator. During these twelve years, let me ask his panegyrist to explain, by specific reference to measures and documents, what are the grounds of the talents he imputes to Lord Grenville as a statesman? What grand and beneficial plans has he proposed and executed? What mischiefs has he opposed or prevented? If he is such a statesman, certainly there are proofs, and where are these to be found? In discussions tending to hostility, did Lord Grenville endeavour to avoid war, as far as was consistent with the safety and dignity of Britain? Was he, or was he not, conciliatory in his discussion with Chauvelin, or was he harsh and repulsive? Was conciliation or repulsiveness the conduct which a wise statesman would choose? Did asperity tend to strengthen the force of Britain, as well as to provoke the enmity of France? if not, it was at least useless, and even unwise.

When war was inevitable, what alliances did this Foreign Minister of the Crown plan, accomplish, and maintain in efficiency? Are the subsidiary treaties which fetched money out of the national pocket, without rendering any essential service to the national cause, grounds of his political fame? What were the means that he devised or executed for bringing the war to a conclusion? Is Lord Malmsbury's first negotiation

one of the tests of our Foreign Secretary's political abilities? Was it the part of a great statesman to insist that Belgium should be restored, when he knew France was determined to refuse such restitution, and knew as well we had no means of enforcing our demand? Was it the part of a wise statesman to continue war because he could not obtain what was impracticable? History, sooth to say, will not ascribe high fame to the British Minister of Foreign Affairs who directed Lord Malmsbury's negotiation at Paris. The second overtures were much more reasonable; we proposed to relinquish contests for what was beyond our power, and to confine negotiation to objects that we could either retain or concede; but that negotiation, whether ill-timed or unfortunate, did not produce the object which the Minister professed to seek. We are told, and even by himself, that in the first of these negotiations he did not wish we should succeed. Are such pretexts and artifices proofs of profound political wisdom? I have my doubts whether the line of conduct that Lord Grenville pursued respecting the first overtures of Bonaparte, evinced the wisdom of a consummate statesman. The Chief Consul was then much less firmly established than he afterwards became. France had lost her possessions in Italy, and would have probably afforded better terms than could at any future period be expected. Asperity

rity and imperiousness then, no more than on former occasions, tended to strengthen the national force. These are, I think, among the most noted acts of Lord Grenville, as Foreign Minister; and I am at a loss to discover what part of them displays any extraordinary degree of political ability; and I cannot in the history and life of his Lordship find any public reason that Mr. Pitt should require him as an auxiliary.

That Mr. Windham was proposed to occupy a place in the Cabinet of Mr. Pitt's projected dictation, I do not find either from the advocate of his party, or from my own sources of information: without exactly knowing, I have reason to think he was not. Few men who had either genius or erudition themselves could withhold from Mr. Windham the praise of a very considerable share of these qualifications. Yet few even of his warmest friends think him fit for being a statesman. He is by far too irritable and too open; ~~it is very easy~~, by working on his passions, to impel him to bring out what political prudence would require to be concealed. It is well known, that during his administration, whenever he rose to speak, his coadjutors were afraid lest he should *let something out*, that he ought to have kept to himself; and it is generally thought that he was not intended to be included in the new Cabinet proposed, though he probably

would have been courted as a supporter. But whoever might have been the others nominated by Mr. Pitt, his proposition was, that the nomination should be in him, and not in the King. Such a project was inadmissible, unless the Sovereign of Britain were to surrender at discretion to the guidance of Mr. Pitt. The negotiation therefore, for Mr. Pitt's return into office, failed, according to his advocate, through Mr. Pitt himself; and if the services of Mr. Pitt would have been advantageous to the country at such a crisis, the country was to blame Mr. Pitt (according to his advocate's statement) for refusing them, but on terms that the dignity and independence of the Sovereign never could be advised to grant.

Though none more highly admires Mr. Pitt, yet I cannot see that, even if he had been in office, he or any human being could have done more than has been done. I challenge the adversaries of Ministers, with all their verbose declamation, to *prove that* ~~MINISTERS HAVE~~ *EITHER DONE WHAT THEY OUGHT NOT TO HAVE DONE, OR LEFT UNDONE WHAT THEY OUGHT TO HAVE DONE.* It is a libel on the genius and energy of Britons, to suppose, that the fate of the country ever rested, or could rest, *upon one man*: in fact, our fate has not rested upon one man, but on the aggregate strength and spirit of the country, which Ministers employed distinguished ability,

ability, skill, and wisdom, in rousing, promoting, and directing; and very great and uncommon difficulties they had to encounter.

When we were driven to war by provocations so insulting and injurious, it was naturally to be expected that all party would be sacrificed to loyalty and patriotism, and that all talents and influence would be exerted in inspiring and invigorating the people. Ministers had reason to look for general unanimity for the defence of the country, and the chastisement of her enemy. Throughout the nation the unanimity was unprecedented; and there was scarcely any exception but in Parliament, where strong efforts were made to damp the national ardour. From the delivery of the royal message, the tone of the Windham party was despondency: those who had uniformly been declaimers against peace, now that war approached, endeavoured to demonstrate our unfitness for war. In order to censure Ministers, they made assertions injurious to the country. Strength meets danger with assurance of safety, when it is inspired by hope and confidence in its own powers. In such circumstances, the wisest patriots, therefore, in all ages and countries, have bent their first efforts to impress their countrymen with a high idea of their own force; to elevate their spirit, to make them conceive themselves superior to the enemy; and in that very conception, to have
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the increased means of victory. To a reader unacquainted with recent events it might appear a superfluous labour to endeavour to prove that a bold and magnanimous spirit most effectually invigorates strength. Should we attempt to demonstrate to such a reader that despondency is not the feeling which a patriot would wish to infuse into his countrymen, when beset with danger, he would naturally say, You are spending arguments in proving what no one can deny. It is obvious, that whoever means the good of his country, and that she should preserve her independence, will not employ himself in loading her with despair. When Philip was preparing to invade this kingdom, would any friend of England and her Sovereign have exerted his patriotism and loyalty in persuading the country that we had no strength; that we were an undone nation, incapable of resisting an invading foe? or would he suppose, that if he accomplished his purpose of impressing this persuasion by publications to that effect, he would encourage the friends of his country and Sovereign, and discourage their enemies? In such a case, should we not conclude, that a speaker or writer of this kind, if really a patriot, and a loyal subject, went the wrong way to work; and that, for all the good such efforts would do, his country and Sovereign would be better without endeavours to degrade their strength, and depress their spirits,

spirits, since such degradation and depression was a very preposterous way to prompt their efforts ?

But unlikely as such a tone would have been at any period, or in any circumstances, nevertheless it was at the beginning of the war assumed by professors of the most zealous patriotism. Mr. Windham and his assistants declared the most ardent zeal for the support of the King and Constitution, but nevertheless strained every nerve to disparage and debilitate the force and energy by which our country is upheld. Professing themselves friends of the country, their declarations and bodings tended to chill its spirit and paralyze its efforts. Cobbett, the organ of the party, for many weeks endeavoured to prove, that by the peace our naval strength was three fourths reduced, and the naval strength of France doubled in magnitude ; that France was relatively to England, within a year and a half, increased eight-fold in maritime greatness ; and consequently ~~(for in the~~ last war we never had eight times the force of the French navy) that the fleets of our enemies must surpass ours. The same injuriously and perniciously false assertions he made respecting the army. I call his assertions false, because at the time they were contradicted by our arsenals, dock-yards, and harbours, and by the returns from our troops and levies in the various parts of the kingdom. I call them injurious, because they were circulated

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by the discontented party with the most zealous activity, and tended, as far as the influence of Windham, Cobbett, and their coadjutors could extend, to depress the national spirit. Cobbett farther alleged, that the French navy was about to be speedily raised to two hundred and twenty-five ships of the line, a proportionate number of frigates, and about ten thousand gun-boats, to be manned by about four hundred thousand sailors; while the English navy was not to amount to a tenth part of that force*.

Such were the representations spread concerning our force by Cobbett, his patrons and votaries; and the mischiefs of these falsehoods Ministers had to combat. Farther, the disaffected party were extremely anxious to magnify the resources of France, and depreciate ours. Cobbett eagerly inculcated the downfall of the national credit, and the destruction of the funds. According to him, we were on the eve of national bankruptcy, and he declared that he wished such insolvency. As the depreciator of our resources, Cobbett was no less supported by his Parliamentary patrons, than as the disparager of the national strength and the diffuser of despondency. Ministers had to encounter these disseminators of weakness, dejection, and despair, first in their general efforts for rousing and invigorating the country,

* See Cobbett's Political Register, for March 26, 1803.

and afterwards in the whole series of measures for defence and preservation. The attempts to dispirit and enfeeble the country were combined with a gross vulgarity of personal abuse unprecedented in political pamphlets, even of the lowest kind, and that probably had no equal in angry ribaldry out of the purlieus of Billingsgate, or for insipid and witless buffoonery, without the range of Bartholomew fair.

Though in Cobbett, his patrons and votaries, Ministers had the most scurrilous bespatterers, nevertheless they had to surmount other obstacles and adversaries in their exertions for rousing the national spirit, and exciting, forming, methodizing, and directing the national force. The transcendent powers of Mr. Fox were employed in palliating the conduct of our inveterate enemy, transferring aggression from him to the British Ministers, taking away justice from the national cause, and thereby, as far as the influence of his eloquence and character extended, diminishing the incentives to indignant resentment and energetic heroism; and all must remember, that about the first month of the war, both among the votaries of Mr. Fox and of Mr. Windham, there was a kind of indifference and torpor very contrary to the spirit which was prevailing throughout other classes. Opposite as Messrs. Fox and Windham had for many years been in their politics, there now began a

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coincidence

coincidence of sentiment, which since has grown into a kind of co-operation, and may probably be drawn into a much closer connexion. Mr. Windham censured the general conduct of Ministers, and Mr. Fox censured their conduct respecting Bonaparte, as if, by unreasonable demands, they had irritated the mild and pacific disposition of that meek and amiable man, and driven the country to unnecessary war !

Another coincidence took place not less unexpected or surprising than between the reprobater of French regicides, and the eulogist of the French revolution. In the first discussion of the terminated negotiation, some similarity of sentiment discovered itself between Messrs. Fox and Pitt ; they did not entirely take the same ground, but, as far as concerned Ministers, their speeches tended to the same purpose. Mr. Fox reprehended Ministers for going to war ; Mr. Pitt professed to approve of war, but towards Ministers observed that line of conduct, which, without expressing, implied strong censure. Highly as I admire the transcendent talents of Mr. Pitt, I wish I could bring myself to have in every case an equal veneration for his magnanimity ; that virtue he certainly possesses in a very high degree, and exerts respecting various kinds of objects ; he is far above being affected by the pleasures, pagantry, and wealth, which so greatly agitate the common herd of mankind. He has
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however, in a great degree, ambition; the passion which operates most powerfully on elevated minds, and which not unfrequently operates, even in such, by conduct that is not elevated. Few even of extraordinary men, like Alexander, would seek power and greatness only by grand and sublime means; like Cæsar, many have vouchsafed to descend in order to rise, and to employ craft and artifice; as well as genius, resolution, and decision; and I cannot help thinking, that Mr. Pitt has more than once let himself down to finesse and management, which are not efforts of magnanimity. On the occasion in question, he was much less open than became an elevated character. However little Mr. Fox's reasonings were supported by the tenour of Bonaparte's conduct, his proposition was perfectly intelligible and categorical; all was fair and above board.

Colonel Patten's motion of the Grenville party was unsupported by any proof, and indeed contradicted by strong proof, therefore it was deservedly rejected; but it was sufficiently explicit and avowed; Ministers and their friends could not charge it with dissimulation and disguise. When Colonel Patten charged Ministers with having proved themselves, by their conduct, unworthy of the confidence of the House, and unfit for managing the affairs of the nation, their avowed adversaries and their supporters had one line to pursue—to bring the allegations to the test of proof.

Those who wished and conceived that either incompetence or delinquency, or both, would be evinced, would naturally urge an investigation ; those who wished and conceived such charges to be unfounded, would equally desire an investigation, for the refutation of calumny and the establishment of innocence. Senators neither friendly nor hostile to Ministers, any farther than concerned their King and country, from loyalty and patriotism, must be eager for the discussion of charges, the truth or falsehood of which, it imported the Sovereign and people to be immediately known. Mr. Pitt proposed the *suspension of inquiry* ! What purpose that suspension could answer towards exposing Ministers, if they deserved exposure, or having them dismissed, if they deserved dismissal, I am at a loss to comprehend. How it could justify them if they merited justification, I as little can understand. I should be glad to have from the Plain Answerer, *a plain answer* to the following questions : Did Mr. Pitt's proposed delay tend to render justice to the individuals, who certainly deserved either condemnation or acquittal ? and did he thereby act as a fair and candid judge, wishing to scrutinize facts and evidence, and give sentence accordingly ? Did he act the wise part of a patriotic senator, deliberating on the political expediency of supporting or opposing certain servants of the Crown, as fit or unfit for serving the King and nation ? Mr. Pitt adduced

no reasons to demonstrate that a suspension of inquiry would bring more light than its immediate institution ; he merely professed *to support* Ministers for the time, *and afterwards to examine* whether they deserved that support. No man can reason more closely or ably than Mr. Pitt ; nevertheless every argument that he either brought, or could bring, for postponing inquiry, when the subject demanded immediate determination, was, and must be, weak and futile. When an able man reasons weakly in a long train of discussion on a subject which he thoroughly knows, we are apt to impute such deficiency less to his understanding than his intentions. Men may err in ascribing motives to conduct ; but in any circumstances, we can easily discern what motives are probable or improbable. Without presuming therefore to state the actual view or purpose of Mr. Pitt's motion of June 3d *, I certainly must very easily perceive what is most probable ; and arguing on general views of human nature, combined with the specific circumstances of the case, it appears to me that no reasonable motive could be assigned for a desire to delay such an inquiry, but a conviction that the charges were false, joined to a wish that they should be believed to be true : after investigation, false

* Since the above was sent to press, I have seen a pamphlet in vindication of this part of Mr. Pitt's conduct, but I can find *no argument* in it, applicable to the question ; it is merely an unqualified eulogium on Mr. Pitt.

charges could no longer be believed ; without discussion they might be fancied to be true. This proposition of Mr. Pitt was universally interpreted to be hostile to Ministers ; and it was expected, that, besides the many difficulties they should have to encounter from our foreign enemies, they at home would have to combat the Windham and Grenville party, Mr. Pitt, and Mr. Fox. During the remainder of the session, however, Mr. Fox very rarely repeated his opposition, and Mr. Pitt very rarely avowed his opposition ; the only active and incessant adversaries of Ministers and their system of national defence, were Mr. Windham and his supporters in Parliament, and out of it their literary agents, especially Mr. Cobbett.

The very first opposition of the Windham party, to the measures for strengthening the country, and carrying on the war, tended to illustrate their views and purposes. Mr. Windham, when Minister himself, had been the strenuous advocate and promoter of militia forces ; now he was the no less strenuous opposer of that kind of troops. Such a contrariety of opinion in similar circumstances, credulity itself could not impute to loyalty and patriotism. No impartial man could be induced to believe, that he who in 1797 and in 1798 represented militia as such effectual defenders against menaced invasion, and so ably and eloquently illustrated the reasons of their excellence, and who had
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experimentally such proofs to confirm his anticipation of their courage and efficacy, could now really think that militia, including yeomanry and fencibles, were totally inadequate to the purposes of defence. Such a change of professed opinion without any change in its grounds, no impartial man could impute to real conviction. Mr. Windham therein merely appeared a party man, whose object it was to thwart Ministers, whose enmity was directed not against measures, but men.

The scheme of national defence was framed to meet the extraordinary circumstances that rendered it necessary. We were driven to war by the restless ambition, lust of power and aggrandizement, and uninterrupted spirit of domination, which actuated the French government. These circumstances were considered by Ministers in financial as well as military preparations. Great sacrifices, said our counsellors, must be made, great privations must be endured : we have an enemy to contend with—an enemy that has calculated, and must understand, the ways and means that we possess of carrying on war ; and we must therefore be prepared, not only for a vigorous, but for a protracted contest. This procedure, and these sentiments, are due not only to the prudence, but to the magnanimity, of the British empire.

In this situation, and on these principles, the Minister framed his scheme. While he wished
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for such a supply as the emergency required, he provided that the burden should not be permanent. He therefore proposed to make the receipt of the year answer its expenditure, and to continue at the same time, the uninterrupted operation of the sinking fund, by the gradual discharge of the national debt. As to the income-tax, Mr. Addington proved by his conduct, that he reckoned this impost very severe, and only to be exacted in cases of urgent necessity. As a contribution for supporting an unavoidable war it was intended, and for that purpose only ; and the Minister demonstrated the unwillingness with which he made such a demand on private property and revenue, by modifying it as much as possible, and by limiting it to half that which was required by his predecessor in times of great exigency, but not so pressing as the present. As a financier, our public steward was driven by necessity to require the contribution of a considerable part of our property for the preservation of the whole ; but he required as little as could possibly meet the necessity. In 1803, the man of two hundred a year is allowed to retain a hundred and ninety, when the contest is entirely for Britain herself ; whereas in 1799, he was allowed to keep only a hundred and eighty, the ten pounds of difference not contributing to the security of Britain, but being granted as a gift to inefficient and consequently burdensome allies.

allies. The Minister of Finance, who, by limiting expenditure to purposes really beneficial or requisite to the contributor, can be contented with five per cent. may in that instance, as a public œconomist, stand the test of comparison with a Minister of Finance, who, in circumstances less pressing to the contributor, required ten per cent. a large part of the proceeds to be applied for purposes immaterial to the owner. In this view of financial ability, I merely consider ADAPTATION TO ITS OBJECT, without allowing any credit to the *speeches* in which such measures were proposed. After all, perhaps, talking œconomists are not the most saving in practice. Mr. Addington is less a *talking* than an ACTING œconomist : arduous as are the circumstances in which he is placed, he has drawn upon income for only five per cent. instead of ten ; and this is the amount of his financial merit respecting the property tax, that, in a greater exigency, he abridges the revenue of individuals only one half. IF TO DO MORE WITH LESS MONEY CONSTITUTE ŒCONOMY, MR. ADDINGTON AS A PUBLIC STEWARD POSSESSES ŒCONOMY.

In the plan of national defence, our Counsellors displayed the same union of vigour and wisdom. It was indeed the grand object of Ministers, to rouse every energy of the soul, and affection of the heart, every faculty of the understanding, and every power of the person and purse, against

the common enemy ; and history has no instance to record of counsellors, who in so short a time gave the most beneficial unanimity of intent and unity of object to a large nation. THIS WAS THE MOMENTOUS ENGINE WHICH THEY MOVED, AND THEY MOVED IT WITH SKILL, VIGOUR, AND SUCCESS. The general concert of loyalty and patriotism was the foundation which they laid for every scheme of preparation and resistance ; and wise they were in laying so very solid and massy a basis, that could bear any superstructure that expediency, occasion, or necessity might require. Their purpose was to call into military action the spirit and energy of the country as far as was necessary for repelling and discomfiting the enemy, but as little as possible to interrupt the productive labour of civil employments.

The army of reserve was only part of the system of administration for defending the country : therein the counsellors of the King combined the consideration of property with personal services : those who were past the age of forty-five, of a certain scale in the reality or appearance of wealth, were liable to a charge for substitutes : the principle of this provision is equitable and obvious, that, 'as property is at stake, where its possessors are past the age of bodily efforts, they should employ their purses to purchase the bodily efforts of others.

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The project of the army of reserve having been carried into execution, Ministers proceeded in farther developing their plan of defence. Their next proposition was to arm a great part of the nation under the denomination of the *army en masse*. In this project, Ministers adhered to their discriminating principle of employing military energy as far as was necessary; but trenching as little as possible, consistently with that necessity, upon civil convenience and productive labour. In dividing adult males into four classes, his Majesty's counsellors proposed, that three fourths of the first class only should be engaged in warfare: viz. three fourths of unmarried men from seventeen to thirty. These they calculated, in addition to the regular troops, the militia, and the army of reserve, would constitute all that would be wanted to go forth to battle, while others should be occupied in civil pursuits, and protecting the internal tranquillity of the country. This momentous bill exhibited a vigour and unanimity that almost seemed to suspend every party diversity.

So often inimical to plans and efforts which tended to rouse the country, at this time Mr. Fox himself allowed his oratory a direction worthy of its transcendent force, and exerted it in animating and invigorating the British people. Mr. Pitt also spoke the language of animation and vigour; and Mr. Sheridan was no less forcible, and much

more frequent and active, in promoting the same spirit. With the wise counsels of our Ministers, and the animating eloquence of our most eminent Senators, British literature co-operated in energetic exhortation, and British opulence in munificent subscription; and never was there a period in which all the faculties of the country were more powerfully and effectually directed to one object than in July 1803, to the defence and preservation of the country against her most inveterate enemy.

Though Ministers saw it necessary to arm the country, yet they wished that the efforts should as much as possible be voluntary; and the spirit of the nation afforded a moral certainty that very great voluntary offers would be made; and clauses were inserted for admitting volunteer associations in lieu of the levy *en masse*; the members to be subject to certain regulations, and invested with certain privileges and exemptions. After this enactment, the spirit of volunteer association became so extensive and powerful, that in a few weeks it was obvious the levy *en masse* would not be necessary. Offers flocked in from every quarter, and the whole nation was eager to be soldiers. Other usual antagonists of Government could not bring themselves to censure Ministers for having so effectually roused the national spirit, and for promoting the warlike efforts of those who were most interested in the fate

fate of the contest : for Mr. Windham almost solely it was reserved to oppose the formation of volunteer corps, which he had so strongly inculcated in his own administration, and *to attempt to prove that the voluntary efforts of British energy, loyalty, and patriotism, would and must be inefficient.* This was his theory, which he supported by ingenious nicety of metaphysical dissertations, without authentic statement or admissible evidence ; while Cobbett poured out against the volunteers vulgar buffoonery and ribaldrous abuse ; *and so he played his part.* If Mr. Windham, in such attempts to repress the national heroism, acted from loyal and patriotic motives, I really cannot compliment the soundness of his judgment. Lord Grenville himself did not join him in this impeachment of the native courage and prowess of Britons ; but whatever he or his friend Mr. Cobbett might say, their strictures had no effect : volunteers rapidly multiplied, and even exceeded the public exigency, so as to require bounds instead of increase. And here I must notice the charge made by antiministerialists in autumn, and now repeated by their advocate the Plain Answerer : “ What,” says he, “ shall I say of the conduct of Ministers towards those persons who so nobly stood forth as volunteers for the defence of the nation ? I cannot even invent a justification ; they were by turns caressed and discountenanced, invited and rejected.” Often as this objection has
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been hacknied, perhaps never was a charge adduced against any Ministers which can more easily be obviated ; and here, as in every part of the defensive system, military and financial, Ministers pursued the grand and primary object, without losing sight of other considerations ; THEY PROPOSED TO LEVY AND EMPLOY AS MANY MEN AS WOULD BE SUFFICIENT FOR WAR ; BUT NOT TO MAKE EVERY MAN A SOLDIER, SO AS TO LEAVE ALL CIVIL EMPLOYMENT AT A STAND.

By the general plan of national defence our military force was proposed to be divided into various compartments—the regular army, the army of reserve, the militia, and the levy *en masse* ; all which were to be adopted to the service of the line. The volunteers were intended to supersede the army *en masse*, and consequently in numbers and force to equal the army that would have been raised *en masse*, viz. three fourths of the first class. Loyal and patriotic ardour, however, soon exceeded this proportion. THIS WAS THE VERY POINT AT WHICH LIMITATION BECAME NECESSARY ; OTHERWISE ALL BUT MILITARY OCCUPATIONS MIGHT CEASE. Highly as they admired the prevalent spirit, it was the business of Government not to employ its efforts without any bounds ; they had preconceived the bounds within which it would be beneficial, and beyond which it would be excessive ; and the letter of Lord Hobart was only a recurrence to the plans of circumscription which before had been delineated.

Besides, volunteers being only to supply one part of the defensive system, if such multitudes were received, how were the militia, reserve, and regulars to be recruited? Unless limited, the volunteers would have become almost the whole army, which never was or never could be intended: moreover, there were not arms for immediately supplying such immense multitudes. Why, it may be asked, were there not? For a very plain reason:—it could not possibly be foreseen in July, when about three hundred thousand men were wanted, that more than a million might offer; and the expense of fabrication would have been enormous, without any necessity or indeed use; and the other expenses of such an establishment would have been very great, without the only justification, necessity. It was not only wise and prudent, but indispensably necessary, to limit the volunteers; and Ministers displayed very great ability *in bounding excess* WITHOUT REPRESSING ARDOUR. Their antagonists predicted unpopularity, and even overthrow, from this measure of caution; but the nation had uniformly experienced the goodness of their intentions, and the discriminating combination of vigour and caution in their counsels; and unmoved by attempts to excite disaffection, on investigating their reasons, acquiesced in them, as wise and beneficial. The volunteers were not only satisfied, but redoubled their diligence, and in a short time became a skilful and able body of soldiers.

Naval

Naval co-operated with military effort, and the year 1803 saw formed and trained for the defence of their country, a force more than double any that our history has recorded, with little essential interruption to the productive labour of the nation, and without diminution of the amount of proceeds *. The Ministers who in the moment of tremendous danger could raise a force that rendered every menace impotent, without abridging useful occupations in civil life, who in this little island can bid defiance to him at whose nod the whole Continent trembles, **MUST BE VIGOROUS, ABLE, AND WISE STATESMEN.** Faithful history will record, that in 1803, Britain was surrounded with danger, which even 1588 did not equal; that in the beginning of 1804 our enemy is appalled, may menace, but dare not attempt; and that we have not only proved we can meet him single-handed, but made him and his boasted equipments skulk in harbours or under the cover of land batteries, without adventuring to meet us in open fight. The rulers who thus overawe the conqueror of so many nations, **CANNOT BUT BE COMPETENT** to the arduous parts which they have to fill.

The spirit and strength of the nation has no doubt gone with them; but men in command are judged incapable or capable, ac-

* Since the above was in the press, I have learned that commercial proceeds have surpassed periods of peace and tranquillity.

ing to their employment, and direction of force and resources. As they are great generals, not who fight without soldiers, but who train, animate, and direct their soldiers most effectually against antagonists; so they are great statesmen who most effectually form and direct national resources for promoting the purposes that the nation for the time requires. The Ministers evinced themselves able statesmen in conduct and result; this was the test to which they first appealed, and by this standard they may now challenge examination.

The Plain Answerer, without directly expressing, insinuates blame against Ministers for their conduct towards Spain. To these indirect censures the answer is obvious—the Spaniards are in a totally dissimilar situation, relatively to France, from that in which they were during the existence of the family compact; they now abominate the French ruler, and wish success to Britain. Why should we force those to take arms against us that wish to continue our friends? What benefit should we derive from a Spanish war? Individuals might be enriched by the capture of galleons, but the expense to Britain would be much greater than the possession of all their plate-fleets could indemnify. Besides, have we not sufficient occupation for our force, without volunteering against new enemies? Were we to provoke Spain to war,

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that very provocation would render her really hostile; whereas, even if she were driven by France to war against us, she would be an unwilling and not a zealous enemy. Ministers have acted with their uniform wisdom and prudence, in not wantonly seeking an accumulation of enemies.

Some adversaries of Ministers have blamed the permission of neutrality to Portugal; but why should we have urged an ally to hostilities, in which we could not afford essential support? Respecting Spain and Portugal, Ministers have proceeded upon those principles of policy by which they had been uniformly guided. With the vigour that will go every length to encounter and surmount actual difficulties and dangers, they have a prudence that will not wantonly create dangers for the sake of surmounting them: they do not wish to multiply enemies, although they do not fear to meet any who may arise.

In promoting the formation, improvement, and efficacy of volunteer corps, none has within his own range surpassed Mr. Pitt, who as a soldier seems to justify Johnson's definition, that genius is not a bias to any particular pursuit or study, but a mind of large general powers determined by accident to some particular direction. In a few months he became fit for commanding in the field, by a different application of those sublime talents which enabled him to

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command in the Senate and Cabinet. Eager, however, after his principal pursuit of the time, he somewhat overlooks collateral considerations, and in his laudable zeal for making volunteers efficient soldiers, he forgets regarding them as citizens. Had the mind of Mr. Pitt exerted that comprehension which he possesses in so very eminent a degree, and viewed the subject in its various lights and bearings, he must have seen, that his project of December 9th, tended in fact to amalgamate volunteers with regular troops, and permanently to abridge civil rights for the sake of military efforts, presumed only to be required for a temporary exigency. The present mode and regulations are perfectly sufficient for bestowing all the requisite discipline and exercise on the volunteer corps; and why a great additional expense, and an essentially important change of system, when the present thoroughly answers the purpose? Ministers, in differing from Mr. Pitt on this subject, have adhered to their prudent caution IN NOT GOING BEYOND THE NECESSITY.

The Plain Answerer inculcates on Ministers the union of PRECAUTION AND FIRMNESS: perhaps he could not have mentioned two qualities by which each and every measure of the existing Cabinet has been, and is, more strongly characterized. This I trust is evident in the various acts

which I have noticed. Never once, from their first measure with the Northern Powers in spring 1801, to their very last in winter 1803, have they failed to evince a caution that will venture nothing rashly, and a boldness that will fearlessly meet every danger. But I need not here recapitulate their measures, because in fact the Plain Answerer, except in one or two vague observations, indirect insinuations, or general queries, **DOES NOT ATTACK THEIR MEASURES—he attacks the men.** He does not, by statement and reasoning, *even try* to make out that this measure or that measure, or the series of measures, was weak and inadequate. No; the amount of his argument is, Mr. Addington is not fit for his place, and therefore, whatever he does, must be incompetent. If the allegation were true that Ministers are incapable, certainly there must have been proofs of this incapacity, yet none are adduced. In eighty-three pages, there is not a single statement and deduction of Ministerial weakness. The charge is often repeated, but *on the evidence of the assertion itself.* I cannot even perceive one direct attempt to prove the charge. The accuser simply states, that “the difficulty of the present day is neither to be managed nor compromised; it is to be met alone by vigour, firmness, and decision; qualities in which he (Mr. Addington) seems to be *peculiarly*

liarily deficient." *How is such deficiency proved?* Not by an induction of facts; for these, as I have shewn, have a quite different tendency. This unsupported affirmation of incapacity is followed by an insinuation that Mr. Addington retains his own ground by sinister attacks on the pretensions of others; and of such unfounded surmises do the charges consist. The Plain Answerer *cannot*, DARE NOT, enter instance by instance, and fact by fact, on the conduct of Ministers: he virtually acknowledges his want of real and precise grounds for the censures that he heaps, in confining himself to vague and general charges without specification, reference, or proof. The same mode is pursued by other accusers of his Majesty's servants; all is indefinite charge, but no proof.

In replying to the Plain Answerer I have adopted a different plan; I have presupposed Ministers neither right nor wrong; I HAVE CONSIDERED THE STATE IN WHICH THEY FOUND THE COUNTRY; VIEWED THE SERIES OF THEIR MEASURES, THE PRINCIPLES OF THEIR POLICY, THE OBJECTS AND CHARACTER OF THEIR CONDUCT, THE DIFFICULTIES AND DANGERS WHICH THEY HAVE HAD TO ENCOUNTER, THE WISDOM AND VIGOUR WHICH THEY EXERTED, AND THE RESULT OF THE WHOLE. Never has the country possessed such wealth, exerted such energy of genius and

and courage, never presented such a combination of resources and strength to our inveterate enemy, AS UNDER THE ADMINISTRATION OF MR. ADDINGTON. On these broad grounds I form my conclusion, that THE PRESENT CABINET OF HIS MAJESTY IS WISE, VIGOROUS, AND EFFICIENT.

POSTSCRIPT.

SINCE the last pages of this production have been in the press, I have seen a new impression of the "Plain Answer;" the corrections and additions, however, are neither numerous nor important. The author repeats in different language his praises of the former Ministry, and *repeats his assertions against the present Ministry*; but in the fifth, as in the four preceding editions, WITHOUT ANY PROOF.

THE END.

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THE
S P E E C H
OF
MR. · P O N S O N B Y,
ON THE QUESTION RELATIVE TO THE
Privileges of the House of Commons,
AS CONNECTED WITH
THE COMMITTAL
OF
SIR FRANCIS BURDETT,
AND
GALE JONES.

LONDON:

Printed for R. DUTTON, Gracechurch Street.

1810.

S P E E C H,

&c. &c.

THE Report of the Committee of Privileges being ordered to lie on the Table, Mr. DAVIES GIDDY, who brought it up to the House, proceeded to make a motion founded upon that Report. He stated to the House three modes of conduct, either of which it might pursue, viz. first the inhibition to the courts of law in proceeding in the action—secondly, as to the committal of every person concerned in suing out the writ against the Speaker; or in serving the notice of trial (which would not preclude the parties from proceeding in the action), and thirdly the pleading in extenuation or in

bar, to the action. He therefore should move that the Speaker and Serjeant might, as there was no time to be lost, be permitted to appear and plead, meaning to follow up that motion with another that the Attorney-General be directed to defend them. The honourable gentleman, after making some further observations, moved,

“ That the Speaker and Serjeant be permitted to appear and plead to the said actions.”

On the question being put,

Mr. PONSONBY arose. He presumed that the motion just made met with the concurrence of his Majesty's Ministers. Before he proceeded he wished to understand whether he was correct in that supposition.

Mr. PERCIVAL had no difficulty in answering in the affirmative.

Mr. PONSONBY then proceeded, and declared that if he stood in the situation of the Right Honourable Gentleman, he should not have advised the House to have placed itself in the dilemma it was now in; but being in it, he (Mr. P.) should be ashamed of himself if he did not give his advice how to get out of it. In giving that advice, he was aware that he was either making himself very po-

pular or very unpopular, but neither the fear of being unpopular, nor the love of popularity, should determine his conduct either one way or the other. He should be guided solely by what he conceived the strict line of duty which he owed to the people as one of their representatives. The case which was now under the consideration of the House was one in which the privileges, the liberties, and the power of the House, according to constitution, were involved to a certain extent. He had stated his opinion that the House was in possession of privileges which they had the right of exercising, which privileges, if endeavoured to be infringed by libel, they had the right of committing to prison the persons so offending. That was an opinion which he would not retract to gain popularity, for he would treat the King the same as he would the people, he would serve his King but he would not flatter either—he would serve both. The two Houses of Parliament were the sole judges of their own privileges and what they are. No court in the country, however respectable the Judges, could or ought to presume to meddle with decisions of either House. That was the first principle which

he should maintain. The next principle was, that whenever either House of Parliament has declared its privileges, that the courts of justice are bound to pay respect and obedience to them. That he might not be accused of having advanced any hasty or rude opinions of his own as to the privileges of Parliament, he had brought with him certain law books which contained doctrines on that head which must satisfy the House of the truth of his assertion. From these books he would read such extracts as would shew that he quoted fairly. The first book was my Lord Hale's treatise on the original institution, power and jurisdiction of Parliament, a book, which, from the eminent station of the writer, must be entitled to attention. My Lord Hale therein asserts, "that the law and constitution of Parliament were founded on the law of the land, and must be taken as such—that Parliament cannot be adjudged by any other court, and that the Judges of the land had so confessed in divers Parliaments." In this opinion, which was taken from Sir Edward Coke, another eminent judge, both these gentlemen were agreed ; they distinctly state that the law of Parliament is not mere-

ly so, but is confessedly the *Lex Terræ*. The Right Honourable Gentleman observed, that he had heard it said out of doors that these two great lawyers had too much reverence for Parliament: but their opinion was not singular, for another eminent Judge, whose opinions were so often quoted by those persons who in modern times are such advocates for the new doctrine of no privilege, was of the same way of thinking. Blackstone concurred in sentiments with Judges Hale and Coke, and he would quote from his book, in opposition to what these writers had advanced. Sir W. Blackstone says, “ the privileges of Parliament are large and indefinite;—that all Judges were of the same opinion;—that in the 32. Hen. VI. Sir H. Fortescue, Chief Justice of the King’s Bench, said, that the privilege of Parliament was intended for the protection of the people, against the unjust attacks or oppressions of the crown.” So far, therefore, was Sir W. Blackstone from thinking that any other jurisdiction could interfere with that of Parliament, that he states that no court can interfere with the decisions of Parliament. Those who thought that Parliament were bound to stick up a

catalogue of their privileges in the hall, might find from their favourite writer how far such an expectation was founded in reason. After such an authority he hoped he should never hear it said that the privileges of Parliament were not the law of the land. In a tract published by Sir Robert Atkins, one of the Judges of the Common Pleas, on the power of Parliament, he says expressly, "that the power of Parliament consists of three heads—Legislative, Judicial, and a counselling power, and that the judicial power they have the right of exercising in support of their own privileges." Was it a new proceeding to attack the privileges of Parliament? If any person supposed so, he was wrong, for many writers a hundred years ago had attacked them. In the case of the *Queen v. Patey* in which the Judges differed as to the extent of privilege, my Lord Holt was of opinion, "that if the right of privilege in all cases was to be admitted, Parliament would set no limits, and the peoples liberties might be invaded." To that opinion the other eleven Judges replied—"That it was true, but still there was no limit to their authority, for the law of the land was such, and such

were the privileges of Parliament, because the law of the land trusted that parliament would not misuse the privileges with which they were invested." At that time, it must be supposed that though my Lord Holt was a great lawyer, there were others as great : indeed, he had never heard the legal characters of the other judges impeached ; they were men of sound understandings, and great constitutional knowledge. The foundation of Lord Hale's argument was built on nothing, because to say that parliament must have a limited jurisdiction in respect of their privileges, was saying what never could be intended. According to the constitution of things, there never was a government in which some discetionary power was not invested. It must subsist somewhere. If the judges of the land were guilty of malversation in their judicial capacities, the House could punish them ; but where was the higher authority than parliament ?—there was none. It might be said that parliament was responsible, and so they were—to the people. If the House acted wrong, the people had their redress by election ; and when the ap-

peal was made, they might remedy the mischief which the former House had created, by electing other members in their room—the remedy was not to be found in an attempt to take away their privileges—The people could, by an address to the throne, praying that the parliament might be dissolved on the ground of having abused their trust, obtain redress, and the next mode was to take legal and constitutional means of altering the construction of the new parliament; that was the way to get relief; but it was idle and silly, he said, to suppose, that parliament was to be mended by taking away its privileges.—(*Hear, hear,*) —It has been said, that the House had exceeded its privileges in committing two persons to prison for libelling them. He did not know where he was to look for their privileges except in the practice of them, and the journals furnished numerous instances of persons committed to prison for slandering the House both in words and in writings. The privileges of the House were not contrary to the law, and consequently the law had not the power or authority to direct that they should be

stopped, and this was the opinion of eminent men in former times, who as highly valued the liberties of the people as any men of the present day.

When he heard such doctrines broached as, that there exists a power more dangerous than the Crown, and that power was to be found in the privilege of this House, he would ask was any such language held in the time in which my Lord Somers lived? Did he think that it was necessary to destroy the privileges of Parliament, in order to preserve the people's liberties? Was not the representatives of the people then considered as the best guardians of their right? Were they considered as the only shield to protect them against the encroachments of the crown? At the revolution, was not that the opinion of all the most eminent lawyers? Did not Sir W. Maynard, who, as well as Lord Somers, was a supporter of the liberties of the people, and Sir Joseph Jekyll also, a strenuous assertor of their rights, did these men, when provoked to give an opinion on the Kentish Petition, did they in consequence attack the privileges of the House of Commons, or endeavour to controul them by an act of parliament? No! they

found that the only means which was left to the people to preserve the constitution was, to uphold the House of Commons, and such was the opinion of the judges, and such was the opinion of the greatest men that ever lived in this kingdom,—of men who would have protected the liberties of their country at the hazard of their lives. Such was the party who, when the liberties of the people were in danger, did protect them, and dethroned the house of Stuart. When he found none of those great men finding fault with the privileges of the House, was he to raise his hand and tear down the fabric of parliamentary constitution—(*hear, hear,*)—With respect to the doctrine of not committing for contempt, he could not agree, for it was to be presumed, that from the earliest periods when the two houses sat together, they possessed that privilege collectively.

The Right Hon. Gentleman then referred to a case of contempt which came before the Court of King's Bench, when Chief Justice Wilmet presided. The judge was a man of admirable urbanity of manners, of great legal learning, of unexampled integrity, and warmly attached to the principles of

public liberty. He had prepared a judgment to have been given in that case, but the case did not go on to judgment. In this judgment, which Mr. P. read at at some length, the Learned Judge was of opinion that the power of committal by courts of Law was coeval with the first foundation and institution of British jurisprudence. So, said Mr. Ponsonby, I contend is the privileges of parliament, and that it is founded on immemorial usage, the same as the trial by jury. With this opinion the Right Honourable Gentleman perfectly agreed.

As to what had been said about Magna Charta, and that no man could legally be imprisoned by the law of the land, unless tried by his peers, it might as well be said, that many of the laws were contrary to Magna Charta; for instance, the Canon and the Ecclesiastical Laws, which are not to be found in Magna Charta, but nevertheless they are the *Lex Terræ*, and from immemorial usage as much so as if entered in Magna Charta.—The privileges of parliament acted upon from time immemorial, were he must contend, as the *Lex Terræ* as any of the written laws; but then it has been said that House could not exercise their privileges, and commit to

prison libellers, because they would become judges, jurors, and executioners in their own cause, and Magna Charta would not permit such a mode of proceeding. This was very true, but did it ever occur to these modern writers, when they saw daily the judges of the land punish persons for contempt of Court, by committing them to prison, to question their privileges? Did it ever occur to them that the judges were judges, jurors, and executioners in their own cause? (*Hear ! hear !*) This, he conceived, was a pretty good argument, in reply to those who doubted the propriety of the House protecting their own rights. Yet they must know that they do exercise that right, and were they not justified in so doing? Did these writers expect that the judges should wait for a trial by jury before they could punish for a contempt of their authority? Were they to stand waiting at the door of a grand jury room for their finding a bill, subject all the time to the virulence of popular clamour, and without remedy perhaps for six, twelve, or eighteen months, until relieved by the verdict of a jury?

Having stated at some length the opinions of the

most eminent men on the privileges of Parliament, he would now come to the case before the House, and state his opinions as to the line which ought to be pursued. The law of parliament, it would be seen, according to the opinion of the judges of the land, is the law of the land ; they had always thought so ; and without stating the more recent case of Oliver, he would proceed to state his humble opinions, if called upon by the House, though at the same time he must say, that ministers having placed the House in the present difficulty, and having disregarded formerly the advice which he had given, had no right to call upon him now for advice.—The safe course then to adopt would be to go as near to ancient practice as possible. The course was this : supposing he was called on to give ministers his opinion he would advise them to call upon the House to commit the Attorney who sued out the process ; he would not be deterred through fear of popular clamour being raised against him.—(*Hear, hear !*)—He should conscientiously be discharging his duty both to the House and the Public ; and while so engaged,

he could not fear—he would never leave it in the power of posterity to say, “ Here was a man who fearful of the clamour of the few, betrayed the privileges of the Commons, and neglected to give his advice to assert what in reality are the rights of the people.”—(*Hear ! hear !*)—In giving this advice, he was conscious that the rights of the Plaintiff would not be infringed ; though the parties were committed, the action would still go on. In the Court of Chancery, when the Lord Chancellor finds it expedient to issue an injunction, restraining the party from proceeding in any law courts, and the party, notwithstanding the injunction, proceeds, his lordship commits him to prison. In the present case, though it was a novel one, with respect to the Speaker, he was bound to declare as his opinion that the Speaker ought to appear in the court in which the action is brought, and plead to it. That was a proceeding which was not fraught with such great danger as might be imagined. As to the parties concerned in suing out process, they, he was clearly of opinion, should be committed. If a man, when he had the honour to hold the seals in Ireland, had

chosen to bring his action against him for committing him to prison for contempt of the authority of the court, he would have committed the attorney who sent him the notice of action immediately to prison, and then would have put in an appearance to the action and pleaded thereto, because there was nothing more distinct than committing any person for a breach of the authority of a court of justice, and the contemning the law of the land. He was of opinion that the courts below are competent to inform themselves of the cause of any action brought of the kind, but he never had heard, as was now proposed to issue from this house, a prohibition against the action being proceeded on. That was a mode of proceeding not known to the law. If he was one of the judges, and the Speaker to send him a letter to that effect, he should pay no more attention to it, indeed he was bound not to notice it, the ordinary way was to plead to the action.

There was nothing so dangerous as to strike at privileges, and the Judges might, if they attempted so to act, be blamed by the people, and be charged consistently with truth with having acted culpably and tyrannically. The Speaker, therefore, must

plead to the action, by informing the court that the House was sitting, that the House ordered certain acts to be done, that he as Speaker enforced that order, and that he did so by their authority, and that having done so by order of the House, he pleads in abatement, and denies the authority of the court to interfere. If the court after this plea goes on to examine the nature of the trespass (and here he must speak with frankness), they would exceed their jurisdiction, and be wielding a power which the law had not clothed them with—(*Hear, hear !*) but he could not for a moment imagine, that the judges had a wish or desire to interfere with the privileges of Parliament, because they would thereby be acting in gross violation of their duty, and contrary to the law of the land—(*Hear, hear*) He trusted that he should not be accused of withholding his opinion on account of the fear of becoming unpopular. He was bound to tell the people of England that they would be most fatally misled if they formed a plan to undermine their liberties—(*Hear, hear !*) It was not because this or that vote was contrary to their opinion, that they should attempt to undermine

their liberties; their privileges were involved by their conduct, both in this House or any other house which might sit, if they thought that opposing the exercise which the House assumed was the way to secure their liberties. But then he might be told that this assumption was too much for the people to bear. What! was it too much for them to bear when their ancestors, certainly as high mettled, as watchful for the protection of their rights, which had been asserted by the greatest men then, at the hazard of their lives (and he trusted would be so now), bore it?—When they declared that one power and privilege vested in the Commons defended the liberty of the people. (*Hear, hear!*) It had been argued that the Crown would protect the people's rights. What! in a constitution framed like ours, was the Crown to be the defender of the liberties of the people? He loved the Monarch on the throne, and was convinced there never reigned a King who possessed the affections of his subjects in a more eminent degree than the present Sovereign; but was not the Monarch (he did not mean essentially), to a certain extent, the enemy of liberty? Why else was

the controul of the two other branches of the Executive placed over him? And very properly, because it was not in the nature of man to love controul over his power, and therefore not natural to expect submission. The constitution very wisely had placed this check, not that he apprehended the House of Brunswick would at any future period attempt to invade the rights of the subject. In making these observations he was actuated solely by that reverence for the constitution, which, with the Monarch he loved, he was bound to support. In former times when contests had occurred, were they not between the Crown and the people? Would the unfortunate House of Stuart submit to the Parliament? And where was the security that at some distant time similar contests might not take place? The House of Commons therefore on every principle of regard to the constitution, and of duty to the people, were bound to do their duty. If at any time it should be found that the House was too much an instrument in the hands of Ministers, the remedy was easy; it was only to alter the construction of it; but never let discretionary power be wrested

from it. If the Court of King's Bench are to decide on this question of privilege, they might with equal propriety decide on all the privileges of the House, if called into question. If the Serjeant at Arms was entrusted to execute the orders of the House, and the person on whom they were to be executed chose to resist, and to beat the Serjeant or the messenger, and actions were to be entered against the party offending, the party might say—"Why, your officer behaved impertinent, and I beat him." And then the law courts must decide on this and all the privileges.

Was public opinion, he would ask, to be the limiter of the judicature of the House? See what would be the consequence. Why, one set of men, would start up and say, "Well, we think that we may as well allow the House a few privileges."—Up starts another set and exclaim, "Oh you have done wrong, they ought to have no privileges, and none we will allow them." So between these factions at their bidding against each other at this auction of popularity the House sinks into contempt.—(*Hear, hear!*)—He hoped, however, the House would continue to be the assertor

of the rights of the people against the inroads of the Crown, and not give way to these factions which were starting up, if they did they might expect to succeed a sort of democracy, than a proscription amounting nearly to extinction, and last of all nothing.—(*Hear, hear!*)—The House would recollect the fate of former Parliaments; they would remember how all good men combined together to prevent the fate which awaited Charles the First, when they compelled him to quit the throne; to them succeeded a set of men professing to have nothing but the liberties of the people in view, when the unfortunate Monarch was proscribed, the cloak was cast aside, and then it was seen that their only object was their own selfish gratifications.—(*Hear! hear!*)—That when they talked of liberty, they meant despotism; and that when they sought the Lord they found the Crown.—(*Loud cries of hear! hear!*)—"If the people of this country chose to be misled (said Mr P. in conclusion) they may expect to suffer calamity greater than that I have described; but if they do suffer they will suffer unpitied, unregretted, and unrelieved."—(*Loud cries of hear! hear!*)

This Speech, from the luminous, constitutional, and convincing arguments it contains, on a great national question, is particularly recommended to the Subscribers to the HARLEIAN MISCELLANY, as worthy of their attention, to form a part of, and bind up with that important selection of National Records, now publishing in octavo.

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REFORM
WITHOUT INNOVATION:

OR,

CURSORY THOUGHTS

ON THE

ONLY PRACTICABLE

REFORM OF PARLIAMENT,

CONSISTENT

WITH THE EXISTING LAWS,

AND, THE

SPIRIT OF THE CONSTITUTION.

LONDON:

PRINTED BY WILLIAM SAVAGE, BEDFORD SQUARE.

1810.

REFORM WITHOUT INNOVATION.

THE public mind being at this moment greatly agitated, on account of certain abuses, generally understood to have taken place in the administration of certain departments of the state, it has been thence concluded, that a considerable portion, not to say the whole, of the evils complained of, has arisen from a defective representation of the democracy in the lower House of Parliament; and a general outcry has been consequently raised, in almost every part of the kingdom, for such a reform in that representative body, as shall bring it as nearly as possible to, what is termed, the true and genuine Spirit of the British Constitution. To this end various discordant

and impracticable plans have been at different periods proposed, most, if not all, of them, deemed by the more sober and enlightened part of the community completely wild and visionary; unadapted, as well to the present condition of things, as to the existing circumstances of the times; and so far from being applicable to the remedy of any abuses, supposed to exist, as demonstrably to bring with them much greater mischiefs than those they are proposed to remove. One speculator in this line, is for universal suffrage; so that every male, from a certain age upwards, shall have a voice at the election of his department: another, is for the opening of all boroughs generally, not only to their residents, but their neighbourhood within certain limits; or without any limits at all, but those of the county in which such boroughs chance to be situated: another, for doing away the boroughs altogether; and transferring the elective rights to the counties at large, &c. &c. In a word, to detail all the plans, of all the different projectors

on this subject, would alone occupy a volume of no inconsiderable magnitude ; suffice it therefore to say, that they all appear, to the cool and reflecting mind, rash and impracticable in the extreme ; and not a single one of them more likely to suit the fancies of the other reformers, who, although looking to the same professed end, are yet eager to proceed to it by far different routes, than the present existing state of things, under all its pretended circumstances of abuse and mismanagement. With respect to the supposed corruption of Parliament, partly attributed to the influence of the crown, and partly to the borough system, an unprejudiced and considerate man would naturally say, first ascertain the facts on which you found your conclusions, and do not lay down premises which may be afterwards demonstrated to be fallacious, and then argue from them as if they were proved. Let it be in the first place considered, that the crown having the disposal of an immense revenue, dispersed through every department of the state,

must necessarily, and in the very nature of things, have a considerable influence over those departments, in all their several branches : and in what manner, if it be deemed an evil, such evil can be remedied, must remain with the proposers of reform to suggest. Would they annihilate the revenue and resources altogether ? or throw the direction of them into the hands of the aristocracy, or democracy ? or how else would they dispose of them ? Within no very long space of time, restrictions have been laid upon the royal prerogative, and various descriptions of people disfranchised of their rights, either to sit in Parliament, or to give their voices for representatives in it, on account of their supposed connection with the immediate servants of the crown ; and had not the increased revenues of the state occasioned a proportional increase in the number of those employed in their collection, as well as of those through whom such revenues are dispensed, the crown had at this moment possessed little, if any influence at

all ; none at least in any degree adequate to the demands of strictly constitutional necessity. For it should be considered, that without a certain portion of influence on the part of the crown, the public business could not be carried on, probably for a single day ; but the state engine, with all its nice and complicated machinery, would fall into confusion at once.

With regard to the Borough system, it seems the natural and necessary consequence of the ordinary progress of human affairs, that certain parts of a great community should mount in the scale of population and opulence, whilst others proportionally sink in it ; and if every city, town, and borough, in the kingdom, were to have their chartered and representative rights done away, the moment their commerce, their manufactures, or other sources of population and opulence began to decay, there would be no end to such changes in the municipal bodies of the state ; as they must in that case be for ever necessarily varying, accord-

ing to the ever varying condition of the different parts. Independently of these considerations, which cannot fail to have their weight with every thinking man, is it reasonable to suppose, that an assembly, so constituted as the lower House of Parliament now is, would submit, without the compulsions of external force, to any such extraordinary modes of reform, as either of those above alluded to, by which one moiety of its members, at the least, would be immediately deprived of their seats, and with them of the greater part of their personal consequence ; and the other moiety be rendered the absolute slaves of a wild democracy, without a power of judging, or acting, for themselves ; but be compelled, like puppets, to play such parts in the political drama, as from week to week, and from day to day, should be arbitrarily assigned to them by their constituents? Let any reflecting mind be turned for one moment to this view of the subject, and the total impracticability of such a measure, without

such others of external compulsion as should tend to overturn every part of the existing constitution, must be sufficiently apparent to render all other statements, and all other arguments on the subject, unnecessary. What then, it will be said, remains to be done, or attempted, with any probability of success? Various abuses are supposed to have been discovered, which demand a remedy, and if those who have been guilty of them will not apply it, either the people must take the power into their own hands, or some conciliatory measures be adopted by those who possess that power, calculated to ameliorate future prospects, and to afford a sort of earnest to the people, that the unauthorized commission of such supposed abuses will hereafter be provided against. This, in the humble opinion of the writer, is no otherwise to be practically effected, than by rendering the lower House of Parliament as respectable as the spirit of the existing laws and constitution of the country will admit of, without abandoning first principles, or

exciting any violent convulsion in the state. And this every one must allow to be desirable in the highest degree, though how to be effected may not be so immediately apparent. The very short and simple plan, the writer has to propose, will, he humbly submits, untie the Gordian knot, and solve the difficulty at once ; not only without altering the spirit of a single existing law, but merely by a strict adherence to, and enforcement of, the genuine principles of those already in existence ; the spirit of which has been shamefully violated, equally to the evident dishonour of the representative, and the just dissatisfaction of the constituent bodies. A violation, by which in direct contradiction, or, at least, evasion, of one of the plainest, and most clearly expressed acts, which the legislature of this country ever framed, the lower House of Parliament, instead of being constituted of individuals, each and all of them possessing a certain defined stake in the great national interests, is become an asylum for men of ruined and desperate

fortunes, who seek their seats in it at any expense of honour, or money, or other means within their reach, for the purpose of sheltering themselves from the demands of their just creditors,* and of obtaining besides a chance for their share in the general scramble, according to their several measures of talent, or want of principle, which chance too seldom turns up a blank, if well supported by both those constituent parts. Perfectly aware that inviolability of person is absolutely essential to the freedom of Parliament, the writer would be one of the very last to propose its infringement in the most distant way ; so far indeed is any such infringement from his intention, that it would be the warmest wish of his heart, that every member should not only be free in his person (so far as is ne-

* An instance has recently occurred, where a party, actually in prison, procured himself to be elected, and thus obtained his emancipation and future protection, with that money which ought to have been applied in satisfaction of the demands of his Creditors.

cessary to the execution of his public functions), but be equally so in his thoughts and his actions, and alike respectable throughout, in his conduct, his character, and his situation. This the writer, upon the best founded conviction, not only believes, but knows may be done by a rigid adherence to the sense and spirit of the Qualification Acts, as they now stand—By the act of the 9th of Queen Anne, Chap. 5th it is, for the better preserving the freedom and constitution of Parliament, enacted, that “no person shall be capable to sit or vote as a member of the House of Commons, for any County, City, Borough, or Cinque Port, within that part of Great Britain called England, the Dominion of Wales, and Town of Berwick upon Tweed, who shall not have an estate, freehold or copyhold, for his own life, or for some greater estate, either in law or equity, to and for his own use and benefit, of or in lands, tenements, and hereditaments, over and above what will satisfy and clear all incumbrances that may

affect the same, lying or being within that part of Great Britain called England, the dominion of Wales, and town of Berwick upon Tweed, of the respective annual value hereafter limited, videlicet, the annual value of six hundred pounds, above reprises, for every knight of a shire; and the annual value of three hundred pounds, above reprises, for every citizen, burgess, or baron of the Cinque Ports; and that if any person, who shall be elected or returned to serve in any Parliament, as a knight of a shire, or as a citizen, burgess, or baron of the Cinque Ports, shall not, at the time of such election and return, be seized of, or entitled to such an estate, in lands, tenements or hereditaments, as for such knight, or for such citizen, burgess, or baron, respectively, is herein-before required or limited, such election and return shall be void."

In order the better to ensure the observance of the above statute, another act passed in the 33d of the late King, chap. 20, by which, after reciting the former act, it was enacted, that "in order to enforce and

render the said act more effectual, “every person, who shall be elected a member of the House of Commons, shall, before he presumes to vote in the House of Commons, or sit there during any debate in the said House of Commons, after their Speaker is chosen, produce and deliver in to the clerk of the said House, at the table in the middle of the said House, and whilst the House of Commons is there duly sitting, with their Speaker in the chair of the said House, a paper or account signed by every such member, containing the name or names of the parish, township or precinct, or of the several parishes, townships or precincts, and also of the county, or of the several counties, in which the lands, tenements, or hereditaments do lie, whereby he makes out his qualification, declaring the same to be of the annual value of six hundred pounds above reprises, if a knight of a shire ; and of the annual value of three hundred pounds above reprises, if a citizen, burgess, or baron of the Cinque Ports ; and shall also, at the same time, take and

subscribe the oath therein set forth to verify the fact."

By the second section of the last mentioned act, the election of persons presuming to act without being so qualified, is declared to be void. Now it should be observed, that the *quantum* of this qualification was fixed in times, when money, by its proportional scarcity, was in fact equal, in real value, to three or four times the same nominal amount in those we live in; so that a fair demand might perhaps be made by the people for its proportional increase; but as that would be attended with various difficulties, as to the precise ascertainment of the now proportional equivalent, the writer, whose sole object is to attain much, or at least as much as he thinks at all necessary, at the smallest possible expense, consents to wave that consideration altogether, and content himself simply with the spirit of the law as it now stands; the evasion of which is notoriously, and every day, practised without the smallest notice whatever. Men, without a

single foot of land in the world, without a single guinea they can justly claim as their own, borrow qualifications as they purchase seats in Parliament, and frequently of the very same parties; the furnishing a qualification being made a specific part of the contract for the seat. Now to do away this evasion altogether, and render the representative at least as independent as he professes to be, and ought to be, the writer's proposal is, that every qualification, whether real, or borrowed, shall remain liable to the demands of the member's creditors, during the whole period of his sitting in Parliament; instead of its being lent, as is frequently the case at present, for four and twenty hours, for the mere temporary purpose of enabling the member to take his seat, and to be then returned to the real owner:—in other words, if a person really choose to accommodate a member with a qualification, let him do it at the peril of being liable to that member's debts. In order to avoid all possible inconvenience, respect-

ing doubtful or disputed demands, the writer proposes, that the claims of creditors should not attach, or become alien upon the qualification, until a judgment shall have been actually recovered at law for the amount; and that immediately after the recording of such judgment, the member should have three months time given him to furnish an additional, or new qualification; so that he should at all times possess a clear unincumbered qualification to the stipulated legal amount, while he sits in Parliament; and in default thereof, that his seat should become, ipso facto, and irrevocably vacated. By this simple measure, without any innovation on, or substantial alteration of the existing laws, the end and object of those at present in force, for designating the qualifications of representatives would be preserved; and every ruined, or much incumbered, individual, instead of seeking refuge from the claims of his fair creditors in the House of Commons, would, from the publicity of the measure, fly from it, as from "plague, pestilence, and fa-

mine;" and the body at large thus purified become at once the most respectable, and the most respected, too, of any that history has handed down to us in the annals of the world. Every player would then have a real stake in the political game, and not be liable to be driven, by personal distress, into measures injurious to his country, and dishonourable to himself. The writer is well aware, that so moderate and plain a mode of reform, as is here proposed, cannot hit the tastes of all alike. The Crown and Anchor reformers will probably, on the one hand, consider it as nothing; a mere drop in the ocean of corruption, which could neither purify its waters, or alter the course of its current; whilst the men of ruined and desperate fortunes, now basking in the sunshine of representative immunity, would proclaim it one of the most visionary, impracticable, and inefficient schemes, ever submitted to the consideration of the public. Visionary, however, and inefficient as it may appear, nothing can be more easy than its execution; and

nothing more certain and salutary than its effects. Without either altering or infringing the spirit of any existing law, the representative body would thus be at once purged of its most objectionable and destructive parts; and new life and vigour, in consequence, be restored to what remains. Every individual, occupying a seat in the lower House of Parliament would then be, in circumstances, at least, of some independence: and whatever germs of corruption might be discoverable in him, must be co-existent with his natural frame and constitution; and not derived from the circumstances of external situation. It will be asked, perhaps, how, in such times as the present, when the prices of every article, essential not only to the comforts, but even the necessities of life, have experienced so immoderate and disproportioned a rise, could the possession of a clear three hundred, or six hundred pounds a year, place a man beyond the reach of corrupt influence? The answer is, that, though it might not do so wholly

(which probably might be the case), yet would it be well worth the experiment; for surely one possessing either of those incomes, or the moiety, or even the quarter of them, "*above reprises,*" would stand upon much more respectable ground than another, who does not possess any income at all, and is induced, *by that very circumstance,* to seek an asylum in Parliament from the just demands of his creditors. The former may prove, it is true, a very dishonourable and unworthy member of society; but the latter, almost necessarily, is such before he would aspire to a seat in Parliament, on the grounds, and for the purpose, stated; and should any spark of honour lurk latent in his frame, is liable to have it extinguished by the very first drop from the ~~pot~~ ^{cup} of temptation that is poured upon it. How many individuals do we not know under this degrading predicament? How many, disguised under the cloaks of patriotism, and pretended zeal for the rights of the people, who are themselves the greatest enemies

to those rights, by an equal disregard of their own honour, and the claims of those who have just demands on them? How many, on the other hand, become the most active and mischievous creatures of ministerial influence, from the same degrading and dishonourable motives? Were men, before they courted seats in Parliament, to place themselves in a clear and independent situation, and be enabled to enter that respectable assembly with erect countenances, and say, "We claim our seats here as chosen representatives of the people, to defend their rights, and maintain our own; here are our titles to that property, which constitutes our legal qualifications—assail them who may, we stand at all times on our defence, perfectly conscious that our fall involves the forfeiture of that situation, which we have been most ambitious of obtaining."—How truly respectable would an assembly of such representatives render themselves, not merely in the eyes of their constituents, but of the world at large; and, what is more than all this

rest, in their own? Instead of being pointed at, as is now too frequently the case, with the finger of scorn, as substantially aliens from that community whose rights they are bound to protect; as fugitives from law and justice, under the shadow of privilege, and sheltering themselves under the meanest evasions, for the basest and most criminal of purposes, they would then become the true and fair representatives of the people who elected them, with no other bias to betray their trust, than what might be referred to the failings of our common nature, to the total eradication of which no human institutions can apply. Thus by a sincere adherence to *the spirit of the existing laws*, which had their origin both in reason and expediency, and were never yet evaded even in form, without the virtual breach of a solemn oath, would the supposed defects in the representative body be at once remedied, so far as the constitution permits, without a dereliction of rights, or principles, on the one hand; or a forcible invasion of them, on the

other. The representative would thus be rendered respectable; and the constituent content, at least to all reasonable purposes, and to the full satisfaction of *every reasonable mind*: for he who expects that any plan could be formed, or hint suggested, that should equally meet the objects and wishes of all parties, would be just as weak as the countryman of Æsop, who attempted to adjust the management of his beast, conformably to the advice of every passenger; and with as rational a hope, as to the ultimate result, as the other of Horace, who

“ Rusticus expectat dum defluat amnis, at ille
 “ Labitur, et labetur in omne volubilis ævum.”

